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LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OF STUDENTS WITH SEN IN
PRESCHOOL EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS



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Abstract

Modern organizational, methodological, personnel conditions of education of students with SEN in kindergartens are a part of the development of preschool educational organizations operating model. The Federal Law of Education in the Russian Federation was adopted in 2012. Before then in the USSR and the Russian Federation preschoolers with SEN received education in separate groups of a compensatory orientation. Children were to be sent to these groups by the Psychological-Medical and Pedagogical Commission (PMPC). Staff for these groups consisted of speech therapists, teachers for deaf-mute, typhlopedagogues, teachers for mentally disabled children, and tutors who knew the characteristics of children of a particular category. Authors name the identification of factors that define creation and development of training programs for students with SEN to develop the preschool educational organization operating model including ways to integrate a child into educational process; psychological and pedagogical support of students with SEN, program-methodical and educational-didactic maintenance of education for students with SEN and staffing. Common groups in preschool welcome children without SEN, combined groups welcome all kinds of kids. Conditions created for combined groups require adapted training programs, learning environment, support from the staff, etc. Through analysis of existing practices, analysis of existing training programs in preschool, generalization and modeling it is obvious that specially educated staff on all educational levels is the main condition for students with SEN to receive proper education and be incorporated into social life.

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1. Introduction

The Federal Law of Education in the Russian Federation was adopted in 2012 (Federal Law of Education of Russian Federation. № 273-FZ of 29.12.2012). Before then in the USSR and the Russian Federation preschoolers with disabilities received education in separate groups of a compensatory orientation (Prochukhaeva & Medvedeva, 2004). Children were to be sent to these groups by the Psychological-Medical and Pedagogical Commission (PMPC). Staff for these groups consisted of speech therapists, teachers for deaf-mute, typhlopedagogues, teachers for mentally disabled children, and tutors who knew the characteristics of children of a particular category (e.g. with hearing impairments, visual impairments, severe speech impairments, musculoskeletal disorders, mental retardation, mental retardation). However, since 2012 parents have an absolute right for the final decision of where their child with SEN will go after PMPC. The decree «On the National Strategy of Action for Children for 2012-2017» № 761 of 01.06.2012 recognizes the social exclusion of children with SEN and guarantees their right for inclusive education domiciliary. It also guarantees their right for high-quality psychological and correctional-pedagogical assistance in educational institutions, as well as respect of the parents' right to choose an educational institution and a form of education for a child.

2. Problem Statement

Authors focus on the analysis of modern organizational, methodological, personnel conditions of education of students with SEN in kindergartens as part of the development of preschool educational organizations operating model. The requirements for preschool education in Russia are determined by the Federal State Educational Standard for Preschool (Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation). These are requirements for the structure of basic educational programs and their capacity; conditions for the implementation of basic educational programs, including personnel, financial, material and technical requirements.

3. Research Questions

Analysis of students with SEN's learning environment in preschool educational organizations in Russia. Namely the identification of factors that define creation and development of training programs for students with SEN.

4. Purpose of the Study

Development of preschool educational organization operating model including ways to integrate a child into educational process; psychological and pedagogical support of students with SEN; program-methodical and educational-didactic maintenance of education for students with SEN; staffing.

5. Research Methods

The focus of this study is to analyze the existing practices, existing training programs in preschool, generalization. Modeling is used as a method as all mentioned programs are formulated following one

pattern with changes according to each individual. At the end generalization of the information gives us the final existing model of preschool education programs for children with SEN.

6. Findings

In kindergartens of the Russian Federation children with SEN can attend a compensatory group, a combined group or a general developmental group (common group). The educational content of preschool children with SEN is defined in the Approximate Adapted Basic Educational Program of Preschool Education¹ of a specific category (for the deaf, hearing impaired, late deaf, after cochlear implantation, blind, visually impaired, with severe speech impairments, with musculoskeletal disorders, with mental retardation, with mental retardation, with autistic spectrum disorders, with severe multiple developmental disorders).

An Adapted Basic Educational Program of Preschool Education (Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation (Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation) of August 30, 2013 N 1015, Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation №1598 of 19 December 2014) for a specific category of kids with SEN should be developed and published on the kindergarten website, if the kindergarten has a compensatory group. In common and combined groups, children with SEN are trained together with the others. Therefore, in these groups, the Basic Educational Program of Preschool Education is implemented. For a child with SEN in these groups, it is necessary to adapt the Basic Educational Program of Preschool Education according to which other children are trained, taking into account his special educational needs.

Thus, the conditions for the education of a student with SEN will depend on the course of the group he attends. In the compensatory group, an Adapted Basic Educational Program of Preschool Education is implemented for a certain category of children (one program, taking into account the characteristics of children of one category) (Kutepova & Semago, 2017). In all other groups (common, combined and health-improving orientation), the organization of training for a child with SEN together with other students - inclusive education - should be carried out according to an Adapted Educational Program (AEP) developed on the basis of a Adapted Basic Educational Program, taking into account his special educational needs.

Preschoolers have a right to be educated at home (Samsonova, 2017). The basis for education at home or in a medical organization is an opinion of a medical organization and a written request from parents. If a child also has a PMPC opinion, then an educator, a music teacher, a physical education instructor, a psychologist and correctional specialists - speech therapist, defectologist, tutor visit them at home. If a child does not belong to the category of children with SEN (a child has cardiovascular disease or diabetes mellitus, or malignant neoplasms, etc.), he is visited by an educator, music teacher, physical education instructor, psychologist, i.e. all specialists implementing the Basic Educational Program.

In 2019, for the first time, the number of staff positions of specialists was approved for each group of compensatory focus. In the first column of Figure 1 we see the category of children with SEN according to their health. The second column called "Number of children in a group" shows that number

¹ Open register of Adapted Educational Programs of Education approved by the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation [In Russian]. Moscow: MES. Retrieved from <https://fgosreestr.ru/>

depends on the age of a child – more than 3 years old or less. And the last column identifies number of specialists assigned to this group. It can be a full-time (1 unit) or a part-time specialist (0.5 unit):

Category of children with SEN	Number of children in a group		Specialists (Staff)
	<3 y.o.	> 3 y.o.	
For children with severe speech impairments	6	10	at least 1 unit of speech therapist, at least 0.5 units a psychologist;
For deaf children	6	6	not less than 1 unit deaf teacher, not less than 0.5 unit psychologist
For hearing impaired children	6	8	
For blind children	6	6	not less than 1 unit of a typist, not less than 0.5 units a psychologist; not less than 0.5 unit speech therapist; not less than 1 unit tutor
For visually impaired children, for children with amblyopia, strabismus	6	10	
For children with musculoskeletal disorders	6	8	at least 1 unit of a defectologist and (or) psychologist; not less than 0.5 unit of speech therapist; not less than 0.5 unit of assistant (assistant)
For children with delayed psycho-speech development	6	-	at least 1 unit of a defectologist and (or) psychologist; not less than 0.5 unit speech therapist
For children with mental retardation	-	10	
For children with mild mental retardation	-	10	at least 1 piece of a defectologist; at least 1 unit of a psychologist; not less than 0.5 unit of speech therapist; not less than 1 unit of tutor
For children with moderate, severe mental retardation	-	8	
For children with autism spectrum disorders	5	5	not less than 0.5 units of a defectologist and (or) psychologist; not less than 0.5 unit of speech therapist; not less than 1 unit of tutor
For children with a complex defect (severe and multiple)	Not more than 5	Not more than 5	not less than 1 unit of defectologist and (or) psychologist; not less than 0.5 unit of speech therapist, at least 1 unit of. assistant

Figure 01. Number of staff positions of specialists approved for each group of compensatory focus

In combined type of groups the number of pupils should not exceed 10-15 children, including no more than 3-5 children with SEN.

When children with SEN receive preschool education in combined or common groups, there is a required number of staff and its specialization, as showed in Figure 2. In the column “Staffing support specialist” we see the number and specialization of a teacher, while in a second column we can check the number of students who can be assigned to one full-time working staff unit.

Staffing support specialists	Number of children in preschool educational organization
1 full-time defectologist (deaf teacher, typhlopedagogue)	For every 5 - 12 pupils with SEN
1 staff unit of speech therapist	For every 5 - 12 pupils with SEN
1 full-time psychologist	For every 20 pupils with SEN
1 staff unit of a tutor	For every 1 - 5 pupils with SEN
1 full-time assistant	For every 1 - 5 pupils with SEN

Figure 02. Required number of staff and its specialization in combined or common groups where children with SEN receive preschool education

Taking into account the fact that groups of combined and compensating orientation have not yet been created in all preschool educational organizations in Russia, most children with SEN receive education in groups of general developmental orientation (common groups).

Thus, the education of children in a preschool educational organization can be organized in a compensatory group according to the Adapted Basic Educational Program of Preschool Education for a specific category of children; and in groups of a different orientation with the obligatory adaptation of the Basic Educational Program of Preschool Education, according to which normally developing children attending these groups study. It is done through the development of an Adapted Educational Program, taking into account the special educational needs of each child with SEN.

One of the main conditions for the effective education of children with SEN in preschool educational institutions is the presence of a Psychological and Pedagogical Council (PPC) that develops specific tactics for accompanying the pupil. In addition, inclusive practice actualizes another task - accompanying all other children of the group, which includes a child with SEN.

In the teamwork of PPC specialists, two basic principles are implemented - multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary (Yudilevich, 2002).

The meaning of the *multidisciplinary* principle is to implement an integrated approach to assessing the development of a child, which provides the need for an equal account of the data of all specialists and teachers of the group that works with the child. The *interdisciplinary* principle of the activities of specialists in assessing the mental development of a child and determining areas of work with him provides the need to agree on the collegial approaches of all members of the PPC. The members of the PPC define the tactical tasks for support, concretize the sequence of intervention and the scope of activities of support specialists. They also define forms of interaction with educators and parents, the selection of specific correction programs, tactics and support technologies that are adequate to the characteristics of the child and the entire situation of his inclusion in the environment of ordinary peers.

The goals of the PPC of a kindergarten are:

- development of an Adapted Educational Program, determination of conditions and technologies of psychological and pedagogical support, and the scope of correctional and developmental assistance to a child with SEN;

- development of the content of the Adapted Educational Program - fixed changes in the activities of all teachers of the group, distributed responsibility among specialists;
- changes, in agreement with the parents, in the conditions of education (the time of the child's presence in the preschool educational institution (according to the format of a short-term stay group - at least 3 hours; duration of contact with peers, etc.).
- evaluation of the effectiveness of measures to include a child with disabilities in the educational process;
- monitoring of the educational and social adaptation of all children;
- interaction with parents.

The above tasks are solved at planned and unscheduled consultations of the preschool educational institution.

The planned consultation solves the problem of clarifying the strategy and determining the tactics of psychological and pedagogical support for each pupil with SEN (2 - 3 times a year).

The unscheduled consultations are organized at the request of teachers or parents.

The tasks of the unscheduled consultation are:

- necessary emergency measures according to the revealed circumstances;
- changes in direction of previously conducted correctional and developmental work in a changed situation or in case of its inefficiency;
- issues of changing the educational trajectory of the child. The parents of the child must be present at the meeting.

A collegial discussion of the examinational results makes it possible to concretize and clarify the idea and characteristics of the child's development (Alekhina & Kutepova, 2013). It is done to determine the possible forecast of their further development and a set of developmental, correctional measures that will contribute to the maximum social and educational adaptation of the child.

The parents of the child ask the questions of interest to them, related to the substantive and organizational issues of the implementation of the educational program of their child. Each specialist can consult parents at their request on the results of the examination and give clear and understandable recommendations for the development, upbringing of a child in their area of competence, based on the decision of the council. Moreover, parents should be provided with information about the possible forecast of the child's adaptation and the dynamics of development in general. The coordination and consistency of the subsequent interaction between specialists and parents is discussed.

During the year, scheduled meetings of the PPC are held in order to organize dynamic support and conduct diagnostic cuts of the state of psychophysical development of a child with SEN. It helps make changes (mainly of a substantive order) in the Adapted Educational Program of the pupil during the academic year. For each academic year, a new Adapted Educational Program is developed for each child with SEN.

When planning the training for a pupil with SEN, the features are necessarily discussed and the main provisions for accompanying the remaining children of the inclusive group are formulated. This discussion is a fundamental and specific aspect of the PPC.

The Adapted Educational Program as a condition of the individualization of the education of a child with SEN must be approved by the head of the preschool educational institution. The adapted educational program of each child with SEN includes 3 sections: the *target* section, consisting of an explanatory note, goals, objectives, planned results; the *content* section, including a description of educational activities in accordance with the directions of the child's development and a program of correctional work with a pupil with SEN; the *organisational* section, which describes the psychological and pedagogical conditions that ensure the development of a child, the features of the organization of the developing spatial environment and the personnel conditions for the implementation of Adapted Educational Program.

In the *target* section (Volosovets & Kutepova, 2011), within the framework of the explanatory note, the grounds for developing an Adapted Educational Program for a child with SEN are determined, which include: the opinion of the PMPC, which is the legal basis for creation of special educational conditions for the pupil; the results of the examination of the child by all specialists of the PPC and the results of pedagogical diagnostics of all teachers of the group (2 educators, a music teacher, an instructor in PE); collegial opinion of the PPC with the main conclusions about the special educational needs of the child and strategic directions of work with them.

The target of the AEP should contain a generalized opinion of the PPC based on the results of the discussion. For example: "Communications skills' formation using non-verbal and verbal communication means".

The tasks of the AEP are formulated by teachers in accordance with their activities. For example, to form verbal (non-verbal) forms of communication; development in all types of activities; stimulation of voluntary activity. The planned results include the expected achievements in the development of a child by the end of the academic year.

The *content* section of the AEP records changes in the content of the Basic Educational Program, taking into account the special educational needs of a child. For example, most of the children paint with paints, and a child with SEN needs crayons; everyone makes a ball from modeling clay while a child with SEN has a task to flatten it; all children jump on one leg without support, and a child with SEN holds onto the railing etc. The specification of work with the child during his presence in the group is written down in the work plans of the teacher, the form of which is accepted in the preschool educational institution. It is done for a week. For example Figure 3 shows us the possible tasks for the second week of the academic year. First column identifies the action, second – special features for a child with SEN that has to be maintained by a teacher:

Working sections	
All children in a group	Child with SEN
Check in	Follow the undressing sequence according to the pictures
Getting ready for breakfast	Follow the sequence of hand washing according to the pictures
Breakfast	Learning to hold a spoon correctly
Free play	Initiate play with a certain child in the group

Figure 03. Working sections

Please note that the teacher is not obliged to record the interaction with the child with SEN in all Working sections. It is only necessary when a child experiences difficulties! If a child with SEN can follow a task like other children, his column is left blank.

The program of correctional work with a pupil with SEN is developed and implemented by at least two support specialists, in accordance with the category with SEN (Table №1). The number of individual lessons per week with each child is determined by the psychological and pedagogical council of the kindergarten.

The supporting tools and pedagogical techniques necessary for the child for a successful stay in the preschool educational institution are defined in the *organizational* section of the AEP. It is necessary to analyze the features of child's behavior (control of his behavior, reaction to prohibitions, features of communication with adults and children, changes in responses at different times, difficulties in memorization, preferences, etc.) to determine these tools and techniques. For most children, the conditions for a successful stay and development are: a child needs to see the face of the speaking teacher; simple, slow, clear speech of the teacher; the naming of all actions and objects that both the child and the teacher perform or use; active usage of gestures illustrating proposed actions, pictures, series of pictures; the structure of the organization of life in the group (the schedule of the whole day in pictures, which determines the sequence of activities); balance of calming and energizing activities; each lesson has to be summed up and the next one to be announced.

All teachers who work with the child in the academic year are listed in AEP (name, position, contacts) (Volkova & Prochukhaeva, 2019). The individual curriculum completes the AEP. It is also a schedule timetable for the support specialists.

The child's parent takes part in the preparation of AEP and gives their final consent to its implementation (Rean et al., 2017).

7. Conclusion

The spatial developing educational environment should ensure the implementation of the AEP of the child, taking into account his psychophysical characteristics. Main characteristics of the spatial developing environment essential for different children with SEN are: zoning; borders of the zones of activity are clearly marked; the group is organized in such a way that educators have the opportunity to see most of the activity zones and observe the children; educating materials and children's artworks are placed at children's eye level; storage areas and zones of activity are marked with appropriate signs;

children have personal lockers or nooks for storing personal items; zones for loud and quiet games are separated so that children do not interfere with each other, because noise level affects the desire to move, causes anxiety, etc.

Common groups in preschool welcome children without SEN, combined groups welcome all kinds of kids. Conditions created for combined groups require adapted training program, learning environment, support from the staff etc. Specially educated staff on all educational levels is the main condition for students with SEN to receive proper education and be incorporated into social life.

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