

SCTMG 2021

International Scientific Conference "Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of Modern Globalism"

SYSTEM OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL ASSISTANCE TO YOUNG CHILDREN IN RUSSIA

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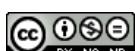
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Abstract

The subject of the study is the essential characteristics of the system of psychological and pedagogical assistance in the Russian Federation as one of the important social components and objective characteristics of the state policy in relation to young children with disabilities, reflecting its qualitative traits and features. The authors have outlined in detail the main stages of developing the system of medical, psychological and pedagogical assistance to children with disabilities, the results of the scientific search for effective methods of clinical and psychological and pedagogical diagnostics, correctional and pedagogical technologies. The creation of these technologies contributed to education system and improved the early psychological and pedagogical assistance to children with mental disabilities. The study emphasizes the role of the Institute of Correctional Pedagogy in the organizing and conducting of scientific research to create a scientific concept of the system of psychological and pedagogical assistance to young children with "high risk" of mental development disorders. It is implemented through a comprehensive analysis of the dynamics of establishing and developing the state system of psychological and pedagogical assistance. The methodological basis of the study is based on the fundamental principles of correctional pedagogy, the principles of scientific objectivity, consistency and complexity, which allow us to study the essential characteristics of the system of psychological and pedagogical assistance to young children in the Russia. The novelty lies in rethinking the conceptual foundations of the development process and the current state of the system of psychological and pedagogical assistance to young children.

2357-1330 © 2021 Published by European Publisher.

Keywords: Children, special education, early intervention



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1. Introduction

The idea of creating a system of psychological and pedagogical assistance to children with disabilities by combining medical and psychological and pedagogical technologies to successfully socialize them into society was formed and scientifically justified by outstanding Russian scientists at the end of the XVIII century. For 200 years, this idea has proved to be highly effective in practice. Even at that time, Russian doctors raised questions about the organization of medical and social assistance to children. They were the first to point out the relationship between the health and mental development of children, physical and social factors, the first to try to describe these mechanisms and identify conditions that can prevent the occurrence of a number of diseases, the course of which is determined by the social conditions of the realization of the child's psychophysical development. Paediatricians have always paid special attention to educating the population and improving the culture of parents since the health of the child begins with the health of the mother and is determined by the way and conditions of life of the family (Albitsky, 2011). Betskoy (1774), a prominent figure of the Russian Enlightenment, one of the founders and trustees of the Moscow Educational Home, opened in 1763, founded the idea of a holistic view on the upbringing and development of the child. His goal was to increase the number of people of the "new breed": healthy, cultured and highly educated. He saw upbringing as a means to this end. Without denying the importance of general education, "education of the mind", Betskoy (1774) shifts the centre of gravity to "education of the heart and body".

Proponents of a comprehensive view on the development of the child were almost all the famous Russian paediatricians of the XIX century. Even at that time, scientists were trying to justify the equal importance of the physiological (somatic) and psychosocial aspects in the occurrence of a child's disease. Knowledge of the physiological features, the peculiarities of the course of diseases in children of different ages, the establishment of the reasons that cause high infant morbidity and mortality, led him to understand the importance of social conditions in the upbringing of healthy children.

In the future, the interdisciplinary model and the concept of an integrated approach to the recovery of the physical and mental health of the child were supplemented by the theory of Vygotsky (2010) about the social essence of mental development. Scientists have proved that special environmental conditions, teaching methods and techniques should be selected individually and promote the psychological interaction of a child with developmental disabilities with the social world. They should be used both in specially organized educational classes with the child and in his or her daily life. Exactly this approach to recovering the potential mental abilities will allow the child to systematically and timely assign social experience and ensure the success of adaptation in the social environment (Vygotsky, 2010).

2. Problem Statement

We consider that it is important to identify the stages and essential characteristics of establishing and developing the system of special psychological and pedagogical assistance to young children and their families in the Russian Federation.

3. Research Questions

To solve the problem, it is necessary to identify the following **research questions**:

- How were the interdisciplinary model and the integrated approach to the recovery of the child's physical and mental health implemented in practice?
- To what extent is society responsible for ensuring the right to timely recovery of health and special education for children with disabilities?
- Can we say that the system of psychological and pedagogical assistance to young children is a response to a public request?
- What is the dynamics of this system development?
- How significant is the activity of public organizations in ensuring the right to timely medical care and special education guaranteed by the Constitution for every child with disabilities?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to identify the main stages and features of establishing the system of special psychological and pedagogical assistance to young children in the Russian Federation.

5. Research Methods

The work used historiographical and retrospective analysis of scientific literature, comparative-historical method. The method of actualization allowed focusing on the facts and phenomena of the past that have scientific and pedagogical value for the present.

6. Findings

The development of this theory in the practice of medical, psychological and pedagogical assistance was carried out in several stages. Each stage implemented new methodological tasks and directions in the field of health recovery and special education of children with mental development disorders. At the first stage, which lasted from 1930 to 1978, we studied the clinical and psychological-pedagogical features of the development of children with various aetiology and severity of health disorders, determined scientific approaches to their education and theoretical issues of treatment. We also devised the normative legal acts, that allowed creating and opening a wide differentiated network of health care institutions (hospitals and outpatient clinics, sanatoriums and rehabilitation treatment departments, institutions for orphans and disabled children), as well as specialized (correctional) educational institutions, including the first specialized kindergartens throughout Russia (Lubovsky, 1989). The transformations that occurred during this period demonstrate that society has become responsible for ensuring the right to timely recovery of health and special education for children with psychophysical disorders, i.e. it has moved to a new period of evolution of the state's attitude towards disabled children (Malofeev, 2019). Studies of domestic scientists in various fields of science of that time-psychiatrists, psychologists, teachers and speech pathologists (Malofeev, 2019) proved in practice that special training is a necessary method of restoring mental health, a source of mental development of

the child, due to which they acquire knowledge, assimilate social norms, implement social adaptation. Accordingly, the rehabilitation of children included drug therapy, pedagogical methods of intervention and occupational therapy. Medical correction created favourable conditions for the learning process, contributed to improving the quality of assimilating new social skills. The devised complex of rehabilitation measures contributed to the prevention of secondary and tertiary deviations in the mental development of children with disabilities in the form of deviant behaviour and social deprivation (Shevchenko & Dobriden, 1998). The basis for determining the tactics of the rehabilitation process was the decision of a specialists' council (doctors, teachers, physiotherapists, instructors of therapeutic physical education). The duration, frequency, and sequence of the application of restorative treatment methods depended on the severity of the health disorder, the nature of the pathological process, the degree of decline in intelligence, the characteristics of behaviour and the emotional-voluntary sphere (Lilin & Doskin, 2011). The system principle in assessing the state of health and mental development of a child, created by Russian scientists, allowed us to implement a differentiated approach in determining the form, methods and content of rehabilitation, to combine educational and therapeutic programmes, to reduce the severity of social disadaptation, i.e. to prevent disability through the consistent formation of social and labour skills (Lebedinsky, 1990; Yatsyk, 2000).

In our country, the second stage of developing the system of medical, psychological and pedagogical assistance to children with disabilities falls on 1978-1992. It corresponds to a qualitatively new period in the evolution of the state and society attitude towards children with disabilities when every child gained and could realize the right to timely medical care and special education, guaranteed by the Constitution. At this stage, people continue performing the scientific search for effective methods of clinical and psychological-pedagogical diagnostics, correctional-pedagogical technologies, the creation of which contributed to the improvement of the content of correctional-pedagogical work with "special" children. This stage also clarified scientific knowledge about the aetiology and pathogenesis of disorders of mental detail is expanding, the possibility, role and place of each method of intervention in a single rehabilitation process. There were the scientific justification and introduction of an individual approach to the development of a comprehensive rehabilitation programme using various methods of correction – pharmacological, physiotherapeutic, psychological and pedagogical (Mastyukova, 1997). Constant scientific search has allowed creating a basis for differentiated content and methods of restorative care for children with mental disabilities. A well-established system of treatment, habilitation and rehabilitation of children with disabilities has begun to function in our country (Baranov, 2009). It made it possible to include children, whose health condition required careful selection and systematic monitoring of the therapeutic effect of drug therapy, in the system of special education, thereby realizing their constitutional right to the timely provision of qualified medical and pedagogical assistance. The system provided for the sequential gradual treatment and education of children with health disorders in various organizational forms: consultative form – organized in outpatient clinics (in polyclinics at the place of residence and psychoneurological dispensaries), as well as in medical, psychological and pedagogical consultations in educational organizations; rehabilitation form – in neurological, psychoneurological, neurosurgical hospitals, departments of speech pathology and neurorehabilitation in medical and preventive institutions; sanatorium-resort form – in specialized sanatoriums of psychoneurological profile and for children with

diseases of the central nervous system; prolonged form (for several years) – in departments and centres of rehabilitation treatment, house-boardings, social protection institutions, institutions for orphans, special (correctional) educational institutions of various types and directions (Rumyantsev, 2004). In all these forms, treatment was a necessary basis for the educational process, and the content of correctional and pedagogical work was based on the age and activity principles of developing the child's psyche. Thus, for infants and young children with the consequences of perinatal CNS pathology caused a delay in mental development, the purpose of pedagogical intervention in the course of treatment was to create special conditions for activating the rate of forming sensory perception, objective actions and communication (Lebedinsky et al., 1990; Lubovsky, 1989). For children of pre-school and school-age, correctional and pedagogical assistance followed the standard programme of an educational institution of a compensatory type, in which the learning process was harmoniously combined with the programme for restoring the child's health. The pedagogical load during the treatment of the child could vary due to the organization of individual classes (Ekzhanova & Strebeleva, 2008; Strebeleva & Mishina, 2010).

Thereby, in a fairly short time, just over fifty years, despite the global cataclysms: the Great Patriotic War, the change of the political regime, an optimal system of rehabilitation treatment and special education for children with developmental disabilities has been created and is successfully functioning. In turn, ICP RAE continues its scientific search and begins to conduct innovative for that time research in the field of upbringing and education of young children with the consequences of perinatal CNS pathology of various genesis and severity, the formation of social skills and household orientation of children with combined developmental disorders, the elaboration of scientific foundations and content of individual and variable forms of pedagogical support (Malofeev, 2019; Razenkova, 2019). The staff of the Institute manages to create and commence implementing a new type of activity in a wide practice – counselling and improving the pedagogical competence of parents of a child with disabilities. This form of work with the family of a "special" child was devised long before the country adopted legislative acts enshrining the right of parents to participate in decisions concerning the treatment and education of children. All these changes have contributed to the expansion of the goals and objectives of special education, types and forms of pedagogical assistance to children with developmental problems. Due to the close relationship between the medical and educational processes, new pedagogical technologies have always been tested in health care institutions to obtain objective confirmation of their effectiveness through a clinical assessment of the child's health. Such a wide range of variable forms of assistance to children with disabilities has made it possible to include children from an early age to 17 years in a special education system.

However, in the early 1990s, during a period of political and economic instability, humanistic ideas penetrated the country, due to which society chooses a democratic vector of development (Dubowitz, 2001; Prokhorov, 2006; Zaitsev, 2003). The situation requires the state leadership to make innovative decisions in the field of social policy. Thus, in 1992, the Government of the Russian Federation proposed to consider the possibility of obtaining education for children with special educational needs both in the system of special education and in general institutions. This is the beginning of the era of integration. All these changes testify to the transition to a new period of evolution of the state and society attitude toward children with disabilities, which lasts until now. Unfortunately, the severe

economic crisis has put a comprehensive approach to the personal development of a child with special educational needs on the back burner for almost 20 years. For many years, society has been offered the possibility to teach all children according to the same educational system and rules, whatever their state of health or level of mental development. The inclusive model of education looks, on the one hand, as cost-effective and on the other hand as the most innovative and in-demand model for society in transition (Wilson, 2003). The widespread criticism of the theoretical foundations and scientific approaches of the national special education system causes a negative attitude to corrective and pedagogical science in society and a lack of faith in its developing possibilities, preventive and restorative effects. This situation leads to the breakdown of scientific and practical links and the separate application of medical and psycho-pedagogical effects on the growing child's body (Baranov, 2009; Malofeev, 2019).

This period characterizes the opening of the first non-profit NGOs in the country, offering the family of a sick child various types of psychological and pedagogical assistance (Muhamedrahimov, 2003; Winzer & Mazurek, 2000). The civic initiative is another evidence of the Russian society's democratization and an important social tool that facilitates the family situation of children with disabilities. However, non-profit organizations were beginning to function in the severe economic crisis facing the country. That is why they are often created and exist at the expense of foreign investors (Malofeev, 2019). In this connection, they promote and try to introduce Western methods in Russia, which are most often aimed at eliminating one isolated symptom or development problem, thereby ignoring the comprehensive approach to the rehabilitation and education of children with disabilities adopted in our country (Batshaw et al., 2013; Bear et al., 2007).

An exception is the popularization of the "Early Intervention" system, which emerged in the health care system in the United States in the early 1970s and offered various socio-pedagogical programs of early assistance to infants and their families, as well as an individual social service plan for a family raising a child with disabilities (Dubowitz, 2001; Razenkova, 2018). The new Western model of family support for a special needs child "Infant habilitation" and system of lekotek (toy libraries) was implemented at the Institute of Early Intervention in Saint Petersburg in 1992. Its leaders at that time were L. A. Chistovich and E.V. Kozhevnikova. They have established the Early Intervention Association. Over 15 years of professional activity it has brought together 30 different Services operating in different Russian regions to promote the protection of the rights of young children with developmental disabilities, underdevelopment or a high risk of disabilities and their parents to receive qualified professional assistance through early intervention programs in our country (Ermolaeva, 2017; Muhamedrahimov, 2003). In many ways, the results achieved through the expansion of the Western Comprehensive Family Assistance System for children with disabilities, based on fundamental scientific research (Bear et al., 2007; Bouras & Holt, 2007; Kingston & Sturmey, 2005; Lewis, 2002 etc.), provided the basis and reason for the modernization and innovative development of the education system. They also contributed to the system revival of early comprehensive rehabilitation of children with disabilities and full family participation in this process. Thus, on 1 June 2012, Presidential Decree No. 761 "On the National Strategy of Action for Children 2012–2017" was signed, which regulated the creation of a unified system of early care services for disabled children and children with disabilities. This system in its content complied with modern international canons. The service included medical, rehabilitation, correctional and pedagogical

assistance to the child, socio-psychological and advisory assistance to parents; ensuring the continuity of early and pre-school assistance, the development of inclusive pre-school education, comprehensive preparation of a disabled child and a child with disabilities for school (Malofeev, 2019; Razenkova, 2018).

It indicated the beginning of the Russian education modernization, which was initiated and took place from the innovative development of European and American education systems (Winzer & Mazurek, 2000). It is obvious that the Russian educational policy to a certain extent considered world trends in the development of education. The introduction of Western experience was not a thoughtless process. It managed to keep the advantages and priorities of national education, its identity and flavour. The process of integrating Russian education into European and world educational spaces, the totality of all educational, pediatric and social institutions, scientific and pedagogical centres, governmental and public organizations, their mutual influence and interaction in the context of the social life intensification contributed to raising the pedagogical competence of young parents, maintaining the family's social status of children with disabilities and ensuring the full social integration of disabled children into society (Baranov, 2009). It is the conceptual redefinition of education as a social phenomenon that can be one of the leverages to overcome the modern society crisis (Verner, 1995). The purpose of the Education Institute was to reflect and meet the relevant needs of society and to become a trigger for the cultural and social life of the state, a new form of its development.

7. Conclusion

Thus, the development of the special psychological and pedagogical assistance system for children with disabilities in the Russian Federation was not linear. There are three main stages of this process: the first stage is between 1930 and 1978, the second stage – between 1978 and 1992, the third stage – from 1992 to the present. Each of them differed in its goals and a set of objectives, ways to achieve them, deterministic priorities of state policy.

One of the most important priorities of state policy in Russia in the early twenty-first century was the restoration of family responsibility for the health preservation and personal development of a child. As a result, it has become necessary to provide a number of basic guarantees to facilitate the development of the public special education system, including:

- providing a child with disabilities consequently with special educational needs, timely, targeted and high-quality medical, psychological and pedagogical assistance in traditional and innovative forms, including distance learning;
- creating a unified educational space in the Russian Federation under regional autonomy and educational pre-school institutions;
- implementing the unity of state requirements for the development of the content and methods of correctional and pedagogical impact on children of all ages living in the Russian Federation;
- creating a material and technical base for pre-school educational institutions, considering statistics on the structure of child disability in the region;
- monitoring the qualifications of teaching staff and the quality of the provided correctional and pedagogical services.

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