

Social and Pedagogical Assistance to Younger Schoolchildren from Single-Parent Families in the Development of the Emotional Sphere

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Abstract—This work is focused on the provision of psychological and educational assistance to younger students from single-parent families to develop their emotional sphere. Theoretical studies show that such children have reduced emotional tone, difficulty in communication, feelings of loneliness and rejection. However, the scientific and methodological literature to assist younger schoolchildren is not developed enough yet, which determines the relevance of the research topic. In primary school children from single-parent families, researchers highlight some specific features in the field of communication, the development of gender role identification, certain difficulties in adapting to school, in addition, emotional instability, hostility, aggression, anxiety. The main methods of providing social and pedagogical assistance to children from single-parent families allocated by psychologists include: individual psychocorrection; group psychocorrection (in the form of training which includes a greeting, warm-up, basic content, reflection and farewell ritual). In working with parents of younger students, parental competence training can be used. The study is designed to help educational psychologists in their practical work with younger students being in an incomplete family. The organization of social and pedagogical work on the development of the emotional sphere, not only with younger students from single-parent families, but also their parents, can become a promising area of research.

Keywords—*children of preschool and primary school age, single-parent family, the emotional development of the child, the emotional sphere*

I. INTRODUCTION

The problem of the influence of an incomplete family on the mental development of a child is reflected in the research by N.M. Yergovey, B. Kochubey, Z. Marovoy, Z. Mateychek, S. Radvanova, and other researchers.

The life and conditions of raising a child without a father have their own specifics and are significantly different from the life of a child in a two-parent family. Even if the mother tries to fill the absence of the father and does everything possible to a role of both parents, she basically cannot realize both parental positions at the same time – maternal and fatherly ones. These very specific conditions of life of the child will be reflected in the features of the personal development for the kid: self-esteem, attitude towards people around, emotional well-being. An important direction in the development of the emotional sphere in a younger student is the ability to control feelings, that is, arbitrariness of behavior.

According to researchers V.S. Sobkin and E.O. Smirnova, it is in the emotional development of a child from an incomplete family that trouble is observed. These studies show that such children have reduced emotional tone, difficulty in communication, feelings of loneliness and rejection. However, the literature on the provision of social and pedagogical assistance to younger schoolchildren from single-parent families is underdeveloped, which determines the relevance of our chosen topic [1].

The problem of research is to find possibilities of social and pedagogical assistance to children brought up in single-parent families, in the development of their emotional sphere.

Objective is to identify the possibilities of targeted socio-pedagogical influence on the development of the emotional sphere of children from single-parent families.

Object of study is the emotional sphere of children of primary school age from single-parent families.

Subject of research is social and pedagogical assistance to younger students from single-parent families in emotional development.

In accordance with the object, subject and hypothesis of the study, the following tasks were solved:

1. to study modern approaches to give an overview of the problem of the influence of an incomplete family on the mental development of a child in social and pedagogical research;
2. to determine the parameters of the influence that an incomplete family has on the emotional sphere of a child of primary school age;
3. to identify ways of social and educational assistance to younger students from single-parent families in the development of the emotional sphere;
4. to analyze the dynamics of the development of the emotional sphere of children of primary school age from incomplete families;
5. to develop and test a program to optimize the emotional sphere of younger schoolchildren from incomplete families and trace the dynamics of the results obtained.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodological basis of the study consisted of the most important principles of psychology of personal development by biological and social factors; activity and personal approaches to the process of education of younger students and the construction of psychocorrective work.

The theoretical basis of the study are the works by leading domestic psychologists: A.V. Zaporozhets [2], A.N. Leontiev on the patterns of development of the child's psyche; M.I. Buyanova, I.S. Kona, V.M. Tseluiko about the family and its role in the development of the child; N.L. Kryazhevoy, R.R. Kalinina on the development of the emotional sphere of a preschooler, and other researchers [3-9].

Research methods:

- Theoretical ones: analysis of socio-pedagogical literature on the research topic;

- Empirical ones: observation, conversation, testing, experiment. The following diagnostic methods were used in the study: drawing tests "My family", "I am at school", methods of R. Gilles;

- Quantitative and qualitative processing of the data.

Experimental base: the study was conducted on the basis of municipal budgetary general education institution Lyakhovskaya secondary school, Vladimir region. The study involved 40 children – students of the 1st grade. 10 of them are brought up in two-parent families (5 boys and 5 girls) and 30 – in incomplete ones (16 boys and 14 girls).

The theoretical significance of the research: the work has systematized material on the problem of the influence of an incomplete family on the developmental characteristics of the child's emotional sphere; the possibilities of social and pedagogical assistance to schoolchildren from a single-parent family in the development of the emotional sphere are considered.

The practical significance of the study is determined by the fact that it studies the peculiarities of the emotional development of younger schoolchildren from incomplete families. Moreover, the program of work of the educational psychologist on the development of the emotional sphere of younger schoolchildren from incomplete families was developed and tested.

III. RESULTS

An analysis of socio-pedagogical literature has shown that the emotional sphere of younger schoolchildren from single-parent families has not been studied enough, which determines the purpose of our research.

According to reviews of the school's social teacher, the following opinion was made about the children: the majority of preschoolers are active, friendly, sociable, and have different interests. However, at the same time, in some guys, aggressiveness, anxiety, shyness are observed.

Drawing tests are widely used to estimate the emotional state and personality traits of children of primary school age. It

has been repeatedly proven that the drawings by children 6-8 years old reveal their experiences and inner world much deeper than verbal techniques or even the method of observation.

One of the most popular methods is the "My Family" projective test. According to many social educators, a family drawing is a highly informative means of knowing of the child's personality, reflecting the perception of themselves and other family members, child's feelings and experiences, child's attitude towards close adults.

Based on this assumption, we undertook a comparative analysis of children's drawings in two groups of children 7 years old living in two-parent and incomplete families.

Let us proceed to the description of the results obtained using the methods we have chosen. The first technique we used was the My Family projective test. Let us consider the first parameter - the emotional characteristics of the picture. It should be noted that the majority of children of primary school age used both warm and cold colors; the clear predominance of warm tones was found in approximately one third of the drawings.

Comparison of the drawings by the children from two-parent and single-parent families shows that the children from couple families more often depicted a smile on their faces than the children from incomplete families (68.7% against 50.0%). In the pictures by the boys from incomplete families, a smile is less common than in the girls' drawings (16.2% versus 25.0%). However, the most significant thing is that the boys from two-parent families depicted a smile more often than the boys from incomplete families (37.5% against 16.2%). The presence of symbols (for example, sun, flowers) also depended on the completeness of the family: the children from two-parent families used them in 87.5% of cases, and the children from incomplete ones - in 62.5%.

These data may indicate that the emotional state of the child is connected with the completeness of their family. For example, the children from incomplete families showed signs of good emotional state less clearly than the children from two-parent families. In general, comparing the differences in the emotional characteristics of the picture, we can conclude that boys from incomplete families most rarely have a positive emotional attitude.

Next, let us consider the features of the image of family members in the drawings by children from two-parent and incomplete families.

The findings suggest that in most of the drawings, the most significant character is the mother. At the same time, her absence in the family drawings was found in about one-quarter of all children. It should be noted that in the drawings by the boys from incomplete families, the absence of a mother was less common than in the drawings by the boys from two-parent families (12.5% versus 37.5%).

It should be noted that in the children from single-parent families, the frequency of the image of the mother depended on the sex of the child: for the boys, her absence in the figures was much more common than for the girls (37.5% vs. 25.0%, respectively). In two-parent families, significant sex differences

were not recorded. The boys from two-parent families drew the mother figure first more often than the boys from incomplete families (50.0% vs. 12.5%).

As for the drawing of the mother's figure, in both groups it is significantly higher in the girls's drawings than in the boys's ones. Apparently, the girls from single-parent families are more connected with their mother, and she is a more meaningful and close person for them, while the boys showed less connection with their mother in comparison with their peers from two-parent families.

Let us now dwell on the features of the image of the father. Naturally, the children living without a father, depicted him in the family picture much less frequently than the children from two-parent families (12.5% versus 62.5%). It is characteristic that the children from two-parent families more often depicted the figure of the father first (50.0% versus 16.6%). The drawn character of the father in the drawings of the boys from single-parent families was extremely low (12.5%). In most cases, the father was depicted as an outline; details of clothing or figures were missing.

Interesting differences were observed in the image of the older members of the family - grandparents. It should be noted that in the drawings by the children from two-parent families, these characters were not present. In the drawings by the children from incomplete families, their presence was noted in 6.2% of cases.

Thus, the data obtained indicate significant differences between the boys and girls from single-parent families in their relationship to close adults. In general, these methods of the "My Family" test indicate that the boys from incomplete families are in a rather difficult situation of emotional isolation.

Let us now consider the child's self-image, which appears in the family figure in the overall plot of the figure and in the features of the image of the I-figure.

In most of the drawings, the children depicted themselves surrounded by relatives. However, attention is drawn to the fact that for the children growing up in single-parent families, there were drawings in which the child portrayed only himself or herself.

Let us now dwell on the qualitative features of the images of themselves in the children's drawings of the family.

Considering the images of the I-figures in the drawings by the children from two-parent and incomplete families, we found no significant differences in the size of the I-figure (in both groups, the children drew themselves about the same size as the others).

It should be noted that the lower visibility of the I-figure was in the drawings by the children from single-parent families. Moreover, the lowest rates for this parameter were found in the boys' drawings.

Thus, the obtained results may indicate significant differences in the emotional self-awareness of the children growing up in two-parent and incomplete families. Moreover, these differences depend on the sex of the child. If the indicators of the girls from single-parent families were in most cases quite

close to the corresponding data of their same age peers from two-parent families, then the indicators of the boys in two groups differed. These differences are as follows:

- the emotional state of the boys from single-parent families is lower and more depressed than that of the girls;

- this group is in a rather difficult situation of emotional isolation: their ties with relatives are less close than that of the girls;

- single-figure family compositions and a sketchy image of themselves suggest that the boys from incomplete families are more likely to have a feeling of loneliness and difficulties in communication within the family than the girls and their peers from two-parent families.

The revealed data convincingly speak about the emotional discomfort of male children living with a lone mother.

Let us now consider the child's self-image, which appears in the family figure in the overall plot of the figure and in the features of the image of the I-figure.

When analyzing plots in the family drawings, the main attention was paid to the family environment in which the child portrayed themselves. On this basis, 3 types of drawings were identified:

1. "I am alone" – only I-figure is present in the drawing in the complete absence of the rest of the family members;

2. "I am among relatives" – the child portrays themselves among other family members: mothers, fathers, brothers, etc.

3. "The absence of the I-figure" – the child does not depict themselves in the picture. The refusal to draw themselves is characteristic for the children experiencing a feeling of inadequacy, not belonging to the family.

Let us consider the relative frequency of occurrence of these scenes in different groups of children. In the children growing up in single-parent families, there were drawings in which the child portrayed only himself or herself.

Let us now dwell on the qualitative features of the images of themselves in the children's drawings of the family. Considering the images of the I-figures in the drawings by the children from two-parent and single-parent families, we found no significant differences in the size of the I-figure (in both groups, the children drew themselves about the same size as the others).

The lower visibility of the I-figure was noted in the drawings by the children from single-parent families. Moreover, the lowest rates for this parameter were found in the boys.

Thus, the obtained results may indicate significant differences in the emotional self-awareness of the children growing up in two-parent and incomplete families. Moreover, these differences depend on the sex of the child: if the indicators of the girls from single-parent families are in most cases quite close to the corresponding data of their same age peers from two-parent families, then the indicators of the boys in two groups differ. These differences are as follows:

- the emotional state of the boys from single-parent families is lower and more depressed than that of the girls;

- this group is in a rather difficult situation of emotional isolation: their ties with relatives are less close than that of the girls;

- single-figure family compositions and a sketchy image of themselves suggest that the boys from incomplete families are more likely to have a feeling of loneliness and difficulties in communication within the family than the girls and than their peers from two-parent families.

The revealed data convincingly speak about the emotional discomfort of the boys living with a lone mother.

Using the technique of R. Gilles, the same subjects who are brought up in two-parent and incomplete families were examined. The results of the experiment showed that the boys from incomplete families had a higher percentage of relationships with their mother than the boys who are brought up in a two-parent family (79.1% against 75.0%).

Attitude to a mother and a father as a family couple was most pronounced among the schoolchildren from two-parent families, for example, 70.0% of the boys versus 28.5%. As for the relationship with the father, their severity was observed more in the boys from two-parent families (50.0%).

Relations with brothers and sisters were typical for the girls from two-parent families (65.0%). It is noticed that a high percentage (50.0%) of relations with brothers and sisters was for the boys from incomplete families.

Relations with friends were more significant for the children than with their families, for example, for the boys, 25.0% versus 19.1%. A vivid manifestation of the relationship with the teacher was observed in the boys from two-parent families (60.0%), while in the boys from incomplete families, this percentage was lower (42.8%).

As for curiosity, it prevailed among the schoolchildren from two-parent families (100.0%). The desire for domination was more pronounced among the boys from two-parent families than among the boys raised in single-parent families (100.0 vs. 57.1%). Sociability as a quality of personality was manifested in the children from two-parent families: 100.0% versus 50.0% in the boys, 100.0% versus 62.4% in the girls. Rejection was more common for the boys from incomplete families (40.0 vs. 20.0%, respectively), and social adequacy was more common for the children from two-parent families.

The results confirmed the data of the drawing methodology that the children from single-parent families have a less favorable picture of emotional development and need social and educational assistance.

IV. DISCUSSION

The younger school age in its psychological characteristics is a sensitive period for the perception of ethical norms due to the emergence of self-awareness and emotional sensitivity. When correcting the emotional sphere of younger schoolchildren, according to I. Yarushina [10], great attention should be paid to preserving the close relationship of

knowledge, feelings, behavior in the disclosure and understanding of the problems being solved. What is learned by children is carried out through the emotional sphere, so that the child can feel the other person, their problems, respond to their condition, thereby enriching their personality [10].

The correction constructed in this way gives children the opportunity to compare their behavior with the behavior of their peers, to express themselves, to reveal their inner personal potential, which allows them to understand themselves and others, to experience the joy of discovering their "I" at their best.

The work of a social teacher on the development of the emotional sphere of schoolchildren from single-parent families can be carried out mainly in the form of training. The structure of a group lesson includes the following elements: greeting ritual, warm-up, main content, reflection, farewell ritual.

The ritual of greeting allows children to unite, create an atmosphere of group trust and acceptance. The ritual can be invented by both the psychologist and the group itself.

Then there is a warm-up which represents the impact on the emotional state of children, the level of their activity. Warming up has the important function of setting up a productive group activity. It is carried out not only at the beginning of classes, but also between individual exercises. Warming exercises are selected based on the current state of the group. Some allow one to activate children, raise their spirits; others, on the contrary, are aimed at removing emotional arousal.

According to A.A. Osipova, during the warm-up, the psychologist can use the following methods of psychocorrection: psycho-gymnastics, music therapy, dance therapy [11].

The main content of the lesson, according to I. Yarushina [10], is a combination of psychotechnical exercises and techniques aimed at solving the tasks of this lesson. Priority is given to multi-functional techniques aimed at simultaneously developing cognitive processes, developing social skills, and dynamic group development. The order of presentation of exercises and their total number are important. The sequence implies the alternation of activity, the change of the psychophysical state of the child: from moving to calming, from intellectual play to relaxation techniques. Exercises are arranged in order from difficult to simple ones, taking into account the fatigue of children.

In this part of the training, the psychologist can apply play therapy, some methods of art therapy, for example, fairy tale therapy, puppet therapy, psychodrama.

The ritual of parting in the training is carried out by analogy with the ritual of greeting.

Conducting a training session by a psychologist is a group psychocorrection. In the emotional sphere, this type of group work should help students from single-parent families:

- to get emotional support from the group and the psychologist, which leads to a sense of self-worth, weakening of defense mechanisms, increasing openness, activity and spontaneity;

- to experience the feelings that the child often experiences in real life, to reproduce those emotional situations that they had in reality and with which they previously could not cope;

- to experience the inadequacy of some of their emotional reactions;

- to learn sincerity in relation to oneself and to other people;

- to become more free in expressing their own negative and positive feelings;

- to learn to more accurately understand and verbalize their feelings and emotional states;

- to modify the way of experiencing, emotional response, perception of oneself and one's relations with others;

- to make an emotional correction of their relationships.

In general, the tasks of correction in the emotional sphere are reduced to the child receiving emotional support and the formation of a more favorable attitude towards themselves; direct experience and awareness of the new experience in the group and oneself; accurate recognition and verbalization of one's own emotions; experiencing a new and realizing the past emotional experience and getting a new emotional experience in the group.

V. CONCLUSION

To work with parents of students from single-parent families, it is recommended to use training of parental competence.

For the correction of the emotional sphere of children of primary school age who are brought up in single-parent families, we have compiled and conducted a program aimed at improving their emotional state.

The program of social and educational assistance includes a number of exercises aimed at removing emotional discomfort and developing social emotions, correcting anxiety and building social trust, harmonizing personality discrepancies and developing adequate self-esteem, removing hostility in peer relationships and developing communication skills.

At the end of the work with children, a re-diagnosis was carried out and, based on the results of the formative experiment, it can be concluded that the schoolchildren raised in single-parent families had emotional tension, hostility and anxiety towards their peers, and negative self-awareness.

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