

# Support Software for Older Preschool Children with Maladaptive Behavior

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**Abstract:** The article discusses the problem of finding effective programmatic and methodological support for older preschool children with maladaptive behavior, reveals the concept of maladaptive behavior, which manifests itself in inadequate behavior in the group, a negative attitude towards peers and the teacher. The following maladaptive factors stand out: anxiety, aggressiveness, and inadequate self-esteem. The authors study the consequences of maladaptive behavior of older preschoolers, such as unfavorable sociometric status in the group, unpreparedness for school learning, which are expressed in the lack of formation of the “internal position of the student.” Our research results reveal the influence of factors on the behavior of children in a preschool educational organization. The article reveals the contents of the program and methodological support, a set of programs aimed at eliminating these problems and covering the most important areas of work with children, such as the formation of socially appropriate behavior in the group and in interaction with adults, a positive attitude towards entering and studying at school, pedagogical prevention of negative emotional states, etc. More than that, the paper discusses key provision of the Program “Informing Parents about the Features of Maladaptive Behavior in Children of Preschool Age,” aimed at correcting maladaptive behavior in children of senior preschool age.

## 1. Introduction

The problem of maladaptation of preschool children to social conditions remains relevant. And this problem is associated with a tendency to increase in preschool educational organizations, the number of children characterized by permissiveness, inability to obey general rules and standards of behavior, lack of discipline, and conflict. Teachers and parents have difficulty organizing effective interactions with these children. In this connection, there is a need to develop software to support preschool children with maladaptive behavior in order to timely prevent social maladaptation.

## 2. Materials and Methods

Disadaptation is considered as the child's inability to adapt to the social environment, to the conditions in which he/she exists (G. F. Kumarina [1], T. D. Molodtsova [2]). Child maladaptation is associated with insufficiently developed regulation of their own behavior, their arbitrariness, inability to correlate their abilities and difficulties encountered in the process of life, to establish and maintain social contacts, as well as a high level of anxiety [3]. The most important indicator of maladaptation is maladaptive behavior. In the works of A. A. Mayer [4] and I. A. Shapoval [5], maladaptive behavior of children is considered as the result of improper upbringing, characterized by non-assimilation, non-observance of norms and accepted rules of behavior in a group or collective. In the works of E. S. Medvedeva [6], O. G. Shabardina [7], maladaptive behavior is studied as deviant behavior, characterized by disagreement (in various forms) with certain social norms, dissatisfaction, violation of moral and legal standards, asocial types, deformations of the main spheres of personality development. According to R. V. Ovcharova, maladaptive behavior is manifested by changes in the image of “I” [8].

L. F. Kapochenya, I. O. Karelina, V. R. Lisin, and G. N. Godina [9] note that the maladaptive behavior of older preschoolers is manifested primarily in the inappropriate behavior in the group, in the negative attitude

of children to their peers and the educator. The maladaptive behavior of children of preschool age makes them not ready for school. According to researchers T. I. Bezuglaya, N. L. Kryazheva, emotional-volitional readiness is of particular importance in the objective readiness of senior preschool children for school. A child can be intellectually developed, but not possess basic rules of behavior, not be able to properly respond to an assessment of his actions in various situations. An essential indicator of the child's socio-psychological readiness for schooling is the favorable sociometric status of the child in the group (N. V. Klyueva, M. I. Lisina), indicating the ability to interact with peers effectively. This is a prerequisite for entering into educational activities, which are mainly collective.

Thus, we understand the maladaptive behavior of older preschool children as the psychophysiological state of the individual, characterized by the absence of a targeted activity of the individual to establish interaction with the environment. This is manifested in inappropriate behavior in the group, a negative attitude towards peers and the teacher, arising under the influence of factors of anxiety, aggressiveness, and inadequate self-esteem, which leads to an unfavorable sociometric status of the child in the group and the child's unpreparedness for schooling.

We have selected a set of diagnostic techniques to identify the level of maladaptation. To identify the level of anxiety, the method of R. Tamml, M. Dorki, V. Amen, "Choose the right person" was used. Also, the method of L. and S. Bellak "Children's apperceptive test" was used to identify the level of aggressiveness. Types of self-esteem were identified using the method of V. G. Schur "Lesenka." The study of inappropriate behavior was carried out using the diagnostic method of R. Gilles "Social adequacy of behavior." Observations of preschoolers made it possible to highlight the features of the attitude of older preschoolers to peers. To identify attitudes towards the teacher, the projective picture test of R. R. Kalinina entitled "My teacher" was used. The sociometric status of senior preschoolers in a peer group was studied according to the method of T. D. Marcinkowska "Dva domika," the "internal position of the student" was studied using the conversation T. A. Nezhnova "On the attitude to school and learning."

### 3. Results

Empirical data obtained at a ascertaining stage of experimental work on indicators of maladaptive behavior, the severity of maladaptive behavior factors (anxiety, aggressiveness, inadequate self-esteem), manifestations of maladaptive behavior (inappropriate behavior in a group, negative attitude towards peers and educator), and the consequences of maladaptive behavior of older preschool children were processed using the cluster analysis methods. This analysis revealed "adapted" older preschoolers and older preschoolers with maladaptive behavior. The number of "adapted" senior preschoolers was 57.45%. Senior preschoolers with maladaptive behavior revealed 42.55% of the total number of children.

The analysis of pairwise comparison of "adapted" senior preschool children with preschoolers with maladaptive behavior showed that "adapted" senior preschool children are statistically significantly superior to senior preschool children with maladaptive behavior ( $p \leq 0.01$ ) in adoption and observance of the rules. Older preschoolers with maladaptive behavior are statistically significantly different from "adapted" preschoolers by the manipulation of rules and norms of behavior in the group ( $p \leq 0.05$ ), as well as their negative attitude towards peers ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). This was manifested in the following: in the absence of initiative in joint game activity ( $p \leq 0.001$ ), preference to play alone ( $p \leq 0.05$ ), the inconsistency of one's actions with the actions of peers in games ( $p \leq 0.01$ ).

According to the indicator "attitude of preschool children to the educator," an analysis of the results of comparing groups of "adapted" senior preschool children with maladaptive behavior showed that "adapted" senior preschool children are statistically significantly superior to older preschool children with maladaptive behavior in a positive attitude towards the educator.

All groups are statistically significantly different in terms of anxiety, aggressiveness, and self-esteem. The most anxious and aggressive older preschoolers are preschoolers with maladaptive behavior ( $p \leq 0.001$ ). In this group of children, the most significant number of older preschoolers with an overestimated type of self-esteem was identified ( $p \leq 0.001$ ).

According to the indicator "sociometric status of the child in the group," the "adapted" children are statistically significantly superior to children with maladaptive behavior in the number of "popular ("stars")

in the group ( $p \leq 0.001$ ). Older preschoolers with maladaptive behavior are statistically significantly superior to “adapted” in the number of “ignored” children in the group ( $p \leq 0.001$ ).

Also, the statistical significance of differences in the level of formation of the “internal position of the student” among “adapted” and older preschoolers with maladaptive behavior ( $p \leq 0.001$ ) was revealed. A high level of formation of the “internal position of the student” was found in the majority of “adapted” senior preschool children.

#### **4. Discussion**

Work with older preschool children to eliminate maladaptive behavior was carried out in the conditions of a preschool educational organization. The idea of “full living of preschool childhood and enrichment (amplification) of child development” was the basis for the organization of the educational environment. This idea involves the broad deployment and enrichment of the content of children's forms of playing, communicative and productive activities, as well as communication with peers and adults, taking into account the age and individual characteristics of the older preschooler. And, when this idea is embodied in the educational process of preschool organization, it contributes to the formation in children of senior preschool age with maladaptive behavior of a favorable sociometric status in the group and readiness for learning at school.

This idea is concretized in the principles of the humanistic and personality-developing nature of the interaction of adults and children, support for the child's initiative, activity, initiative in various types of activities (play, communicative, productive, perception of fiction). These principles form the theoretical basis of the model for preventing the maladaptive behavior of children in preschool educational organizations and prescribe the implementation of value-based, personality-oriented, and activity-oriented approaches.

Considering the problems that arise in older preschoolers with maladaptive behavior, we have developed and implemented a set of programs covering such important areas of work with children as the formation of socially appropriate behavior in the group and in interaction with adults, the formation of a positive attitude towards admission and study at school, the pedagogical prevention of negative emotional states. Also, the program “Informing parents about the features of maladaptive behavior in children of senior preschool age” was developed.

The program “The formation of socially adequate behavior of older preschoolers in a group and interaction with adults” was aimed at creating a positive internal attitude in children towards social rules of behavior. The leading methods in the work of the educator with children are the following: the creation of educational situations, word games, conversations based on real stories and poems, explanation, clarification, example method, the use of paintings on the topic “Rules of conduct in kindergarten” (in a group and at school). An analysis of the upbringing situations provided the children with the necessary knowledge about the rules of behavior in the current conditions, how to resolve them. The program “Forming a positive attitude among senior preschoolers in admission and learning at school” ensured the following: the formation of positive educational motivation in children with maladaptive behavior; positive emotional attitude towards school; the orientation of children to the upcoming educational activities at school, a meaningful idea of preparation for school; on the formation of constructive skills in communication with peers.

The first section of the program “Soon to school” is aimed at the formation of knowledge among senior preschool children about the profession of a teacher; about the distinctive features of the school from kindergarten; to familiarize senior preschoolers with school clothes and school supplies. The second section of the program “I and society” is aimed at developing constructive skills of interaction with peers and adults, developing the need for mutual understanding and empathy for adults and peers, overcoming an alienated position in relation to peers, ensuring the correct perception of peers. Conversations on school subjects, the examination of subject pictures, reading stories, and poems about the school, role-playing subjects of the plot contributed to the formation of a positive attitude towards entering and studying at school.

The program “Pedagogical prevention of negative emotional states in older preschool children” was aimed at eliminating children's fears, internal tension, stiffness, anxiety, as well as the development of mental processes (attention, memory, thinking, imagination, speech). The section “In the world of emotions”

is aimed at reducing anxiety, aggression, psycho-emotional stress, overcoming negative experiences. The section “My self-esteem” is aimed at the formation of adequate self-esteem, increasing the lowered self-esteem of senior preschoolers. In developing classes, various drawing techniques (“Monotipiya,” “Clew drawing,” “Nitkografiya,” “Plasticine composition,” “Hatching”), LEGO materials (designer series, which are sets of parts for assembling and modeling various objects) are applied. This contributed to the development in children of benevolence, understanding of the interlocutor, mutual tolerance, as well as their ability to work in a group and relieve psycho-emotional stress.

The program “Informing parents about the features of maladaptive behavior in children of preschool age” is aimed at the following: familiarization of parents with the peculiarities of maladaptive behavior of older preschoolers, with the leading causes of this phenomenon, methods, forms, and means to prevent maladaptive behavior in older preschool children. The main forms of implementing this program were seminars and workshops on the following modules: “Maladaptation of preschoolers to the educational environment of the preschool educational organization”; “The maladaptive behavior of senior preschoolers in the educational environment of preschool organizations”; “Pedagogical conditions for the prevention of maladaptive behavior in children of preschool age.”

## 5. Conclusion

An analysis of the scientific literature and the results of our research allowed us to formulate the following conclusions:

- The maladaptive behavior of older preschool children is a complex systemic formation, manifested in inappropriate behavior in the group, in a negative attitude to peers and the teacher and arising under the influence of factors such as aggressiveness, anxiety and inadequate self-esteem;
- Manifestations of maladaptive behavior of older preschoolers, the severity of anxiety, aggressiveness, and inadequate self-esteem in older preschoolers as factors of maladaptive behavior determine the unfavorable sociometric status in the group and the lack of readiness to study at school. Unreadiness for learning at school is manifested in the following: a low level of formation of the student's internal position (negative attitude to entering and staying in school) or an average level of formation of the student's internal position (a positive attitude towards entering and staying at school, but with the preservation of the priority of the social aspects of the school lifestyle compared to school ones);
- Prevention of maladaptive behavior is possible when implementing in practice such programs as “The formation of socially appropriate behavior of older preschoolers in a group and interaction with adults,” “Formation of a positive attitude among senior preschoolers towards entering and studying at school,” “Pedagogical prevention of negative emotional states in children of preschool age,” “Informing parents about the features of maladaptive behavior in children of preschool age.”

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