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SOCIAL ADAPTATION PROBLEM OF A CHILD WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD AUTISM

Abstract. The article focuses on the social adaptation problem of children suffering from early childhood autism (ECA) and experiencing delays in the development of all mental processes due to the syndrome. At the beginning of the article, the reader is introduced to a discussion of research conducted by scientists from the past century who worked on this issue. These researchers accurately identified the diagnostic methods and psychological characteristics of children with ECA syndrome. They classified such children as belonging to an atypical category, citing disruptions in their personality structure and emotional-volitional sphere caused by ECA syndrome. Nevertheless, the scientists also noted that some of the mental functions in these children are isolated, yet remain "operational." The article highlights the findings from observations that revealed the impact of pathology on the behavior and speech of children with ECA syndrome. Scientists emphasized that these children exhibit asynchronous development in speech and other mental functions. Independence and autonomy in their behavior and speech are retained for an extended period. In other words, it is impossible to observe conscious behavior or speech in a child suffering from ECA syndrome. The importance of involving such children in psychocorrectional measures is particularly emphasized in the article. In the methodology section of the article, it is recommended that specialists or parents pay more attention to certain characteristics considered essential in children with ECA syndrome. These specific traits are the primary factors causing social adaptation problems in autistic children. For this reason, we decided to implement our psychocorrection methods using diagnostic techniques. While applying these diagnostic methods, we focused on three parameters of the autistic child's behavior and speech characteristics. These characteristics were assessed using a scoring system. Based on the results obtained, we concluded that the primary goal when working with a child suffering from ECA through

psychopedagogical correction methods should be to develop both cognitive activity and social adaptation in the child. Therefore, psychopedagogical correction work for the social adaptation of a child with ECA was designed based on 12 criteria, and the desired outcome was achieved. In autism, individuals avoid human contact and do not emotionally differentiate between inanimate and animate objects, showing a preference for inanimate objects and rejecting living beings. They exhibit emotional resonance to surrounding situations yet display indifference and coldness even toward their close ones. Along with these traits, they also exhibit a high degree of fear and sensitivity to loud sounds. Characteristic sensory stimuli such as tactile, temperature, light and sound are unpleasant and traumatizing for these children. Consequently, stimuli that are acceptable for a normal healthy child become sources of emotional discomfort for an autistic child. The strongest stimulus for an autistic child is the human face. Autistic fears distort their perception of the material world. Research has shown that these children do not perceive objects in their environment as a whole but rather based on separate affective features.

Keywords: personality; socialization; social; adaptation; early childhood autism (ECA); psychopedagogical correction; environment.

INTRODUCTION / ВСТУП

Statement of the problem / Постановка проблеми. In modern times, the concept of socialization of personality is defined as the development of an individual as an active participant in social experience through its assimilation. An individual becomes a person of social status by socializing in public life and acquiring from the social environment knowledge and skills considered necessary for his life.

It should be noted that many decisions and orders approved by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan I. Aliyev in the "State Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Azerbaijan", approved by the Order of 24.10.2013, reflect issues of education, integration into society and social adaptation of children in need of care, including children suffering from early childhood autism syndrome [1].

Thus, when we say "socialization", we see the socialization of its natural essence and the transformation of personality into personality as a result of the child's assimilation of multifaceted social life experience [2]. Socialization is understood as the norms of basic human relations, rules of social behavior, types of activity and forms of communication. The organization of this process depends primarily on society, which is called the social environment. When we talk about

the social environment, the fullness of space is presented as the solidarity of individuals as a result of the influence of biosocial factors. The main source of socialization is the family, educational institutions, public organizations, etc. It is known that in the social development of a child, the influence of biological and social factors acts uniformly. L. Vygotsky noted that “the normal entry of a child into civilization usually occurs together with the process of his natural-organic development. Both plans of development, i.e. the plans of natural and cultural development, complement each other. Both lines converge and form a single socio-biological plan, which leads to the formation of the child’s personality” [8, p. 273-291].

Analysis conducted regularly by various organizations (medical, psychological, pedagogical, social, etc.) on the psychophysical and social health of children has shown that the number of children and adolescents with various developmental delays is increasing. Thus, according to information from these organizations, from 11 to 70 % of children need psychological and social assistance. Among them, a special place is occupied by the category of children with early childhood autism syndrome. According to the latest research statistics, autism occurs in one or two children out of every 10,000. The National Autistic Society of England [9] has acknowledged that one in 110 children suffers from autism. Other studies have revealed the fact that autism is more common in boys than in girls. According to statistics, only one in four children with autism is a girl.

In 2016–2017, the Simonsov Science Foundation presented readers with a number of scientific publications on the treatment of autism, its connection with genetics and diagnostics. The presented publications are very useful for working with children with autism. But it seems to us that there is a gap in the methods that we consider important for the adaptation of children suffering from a specific syndrome of early childhood autism to the social environment. The term "autism" was first introduced into science in 1912. Under the term autism, he mentioned that the activity of people with special thinking is regulated by special emotional needs, regardless of reality. Autism means "extreme" loneliness of the child. In the case of autism, the child's social development disorder is also not related to his intellectual development. On the basis of stereotypy, such children who do not like any changes in the environment have a speech development disorder. Based on this, one can observe a decrease in the ability to establish emotional contact and a delay in social development.

According to the proposed concepts, autism can manifest itself in the following ways according to the level of emotional regulation:

1. Completely withdraw from the events happening around;
2. Actively isolated;
3. Predominance of autistic interests;

4. Difficulties in communication and interaction with other people.

The pathogenetic mechanism of childhood autism is currently not fully understood by science [5, p. 335–358].

Analysis of (major) recent research and publications / Аналіз (основних) останніх досліджень і публікацій. A number of scientists in the country and abroad are working on this problem. Particularly noteworthy are the studies of such scientists as: A. Bayramov [2], A. Alizade [2], E. Shafieva [3, p. 49–115], M. Mamedova [4, p. 110–123].

AIM AND TASKS / МЕТА ТА ЗАВДАННЯ

The main *purpose* of the article is to organize psychological and pedagogical correctional work in order to expand the child's social relations and form knowledge, skills and behavior in accordance with the norms in the process of social adaptation, taking into account the developmental characteristics of children suffering from early childhood autism syndrome and preventing the second delay resulting from their developmental defect.

Taking into account the developmental characteristics of the type inherent in each category of disorders, the following *objectives* are planned for the social adaptation of a child with early autism syndrome:

1. Comparative analysis of scientific literature on the developmental characteristics of this type of disorder in children with early autism syndrome;
2. Studying the feasibility of social adaptation of children with early autism syndrome in a comprehensive school, studying the negative manifestations and complications that occur in children at this time, searching for optimal ways and means of eliminating them;
3. During the study, it is necessary to compare the psychological and pedagogical characteristics of children with early autism syndrome, taking into account the characteristics of their development within age limits;
4. Psychological and pedagogical correction of social adaptation of a child with early autism syndrome should be carried out by developing a theoretical model of work and testing it in an experiment.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK / ТЕОРЕТИЧНІ ОСНОВИ

Some scientists point out the similarity of early childhood autism with schizophrenia. That is, early childhood autism is the beginning of schizophrenia. Another group of researchers associates early childhood autism with an organic process in the brain stem associated with intrauterine damage to the nervous system. A third group of researchers associates this disease with chronic psychological disorders in the parent-child relationship, namely: 1) "coldness,

indifferent attitude of the mother to her child disrupts the emotional (affective) relationship of the child with the mother; 2) as a result of despotic pressure of the parent, the actions of the child, his emotional situation, a psychogenic situation arises, paralyzing the sphere, which causes an increase in their autism.

To confirm a diagnosis of autism, it is important to have impairments in 3 areas. These are the following:

- Lack of social interactions;
- Having problems in the area of language and communication;
- Limited interests and stereotypical behavior [11].

Early diagnosis of autism is possible based on the characteristics of a newborn child:

- They make a different impression compared to other babies;
- They rarely cry and whine;
- In general, they give the impression of a calm baby;
- Experiences inexplicable anxiety.
- Do not smile;
- They are not interested in toys.

In a one-year-old child, the following characteristics indicate early autism:

- They do not participate in games like other normal children;
- They do not express their love and do not understand the love shown;
- Have problems with eating solid foods;
- They are not interested in the sounds and sights that interest their peers, they give the impression that they do not see and do not hear;
- They may be interested in various stimuli that others do not notice.

The sensory processing characteristics of children with autism also attract attention due to their uniqueness.

Children with autism have virtually no eye contact. They do not look at stationary objects or people's faces around them. Some autistic children look into the eyes, but their gaze seems empty and meaningless [3, p. 49–115]. Weakness or lack of social contacts affects both loved ones and peers. An autistic child feels lonely at home or in a group of children: he looks away, does not respond when called, does not observe the actions of others. Even when he is around children, he feels lonely and behaves more silently.

In general, the autistic orientation is characteristically manifested in all intellectual activity. Games, fantasies, interests and even intellectual activity do not correspond to reality. Their content is monotonous. For years they draw the same picture, play the same game, perform the same stereotypical actions. At 8-10 years old, their games are manipulative.

As in the game, poorly developed motor skills can be observed in behavior. We can see in autistic children the inconsistency of voluntary movements, the difficulty of elementary self-care movements.

Weakness of mental tone can be observed in the period of one and a half years. As an example, we can cite general lethargy, insufficiency associated with the instinctive sphere (lack of appetite, weakness of the instinct of self-defense, lack of reaction to discomfort). The gait of an autistic child is unreliable, in his movements one can also see strong stereotypes, rhythmic tension and impulsive movements. These features can be observed in the behavior of a child suffering from early childhood autism syndrome [6].

The above features are not information about a specific child with autism. These data are indicators that allow specialists to pay attention to the developmental and social adaptation deficiencies of a child suffering from early autism syndrome.

A child suffering from early childhood autism syndrome will be defined by the severity of antisocial behavior, which will negatively affect his or her overall mental development. As a result, undesirable situations arise, namely:

- During classes, the productivity of mental functions will decrease;
- Negative situations will arise in the personality structure and character traits;
- Emotional mood will be inadequate;
- He will not be able to contact with peers;
- Will not obey the command of adults.

Indicators that hinder social adaptation of children suffering from early autism syndrome:

1. Impaired concentration.
2. Underdeveloped speech function.
3. The child is closed off from his "inner world" and lacks interest in the environment.
4. Underdevelopment of cognitive functions in accordance with the psychophysiological age of the child.
5. The relevance of the problem of maladaptation of the social environment by making different sounds.

The main goal of the method was to ensure the level of social adaptation of children suffering from early autism syndrome, their integration into the social environment, and the regulation of the child's behavior in the everyday and social environment. At the same time, we presented a number of criteria that allow us to "see" aspects that hinder the process of integration into society and social adaptation. The main goal of this method was also to increase the ability of a child

suffering from early autism syndrome to concentrate on the environment and form ideas about the environment. For this reason, the method of social adaptation of a child after primarily psychocorrectional exercises applied to him should serve to bring him out of the "inner world" and manifest his inclination towards the people around him, clarify everyday knowledge and skills, enrich social experience and imagination, and understand the reality of the social environment.

We have obtained certain information about the factors that create difficulties in the social adaptation of children suffering from early autism syndrome. When applying the method [6] to establish affective relationships with children suffering from early autism syndrome, we followed the following rules:

- first of all, it is impossible to exert any influence on the child and immediately start communicating with him;
- the first contact with the child should be adequate, the conditions should be organized in accordance with the level of his activity;
- it is important to maintain a high level of valence of the specialist himself;
- it is necessary to clothe situations that the child likes in different forms;
- during affective contact, it is impossible to influence the child's requests;
- after the child's demands for contact have increased, the child's forms of contact may become more complex. At this time, the specialist becomes a positive affective center of the situation;
- after establishing the structure of social contacts, complex forms of new contact data can be introduced;
- it is important to implement social contact quantitatively;
- as a result of achieving affective relationships with the child, the child develops trust in the specialist, and the specialist should try to distance the child from conflicts in the family.

As social contact is established, the child's attention gradually becomes focused on the learning process, resulting in the child gaining confidence in joint social contact [10].

Thus, based on the results of the method we applied, it was established that the psychophysiological base of a child suffering from early autism syndrome should not be too weak and insufficient for social adaptation. A child suffering from early autism syndrome demonstrates a significant degree of disintegration in a children's group, maladaptive forms during social interactions and a low level of need for communication. For this reason, in order to solve the problem of social adaptation of a child suffering from early autism syndrome, first of all, his voluntary attention, which may already be formed, should be subject to

psychocorrection at a minimum level. For example, the attention span of a typical three-year-old child is estimated at 10-12 minutes. A specialist should not forget about this pattern when conducting psychocorrectional work with a child suffering from early autism syndrome. In general, when working with a child suffering from early autism syndrome, in the psychological and pedagogical sphere, the main goal should be the formation of both cognitive activity and social adaptation in the child.

For this reason, we considered it necessary to build psychological and pedagogical work on social adaptation of a child suffering from early autism syndrome as follows:

1. For social adaptation of children suffering from early autism syndrome, it is necessary to create a positive psychological and pedagogical environment, apply psychological and pedagogical correctional work and observe the dynamics of the process.

2. If you do not interfere with psychological and pedagogical correctional work and activities in the cognitive activity, socio-economic knowledge and skills of children suffering from early autism syndrome, the likelihood of secondary and more defects in the child's mental development will increase. In this regard, adjust psychocorrectional work on concentration of attention in accordance with the child's age regime and analyze the success of this work.

3. Develop communication skills necessary for social adaptation of a child suffering from early autism syndrome. Here, it is necessary to highlight the correctional work carried out by a speech therapist.

4. Achieve an elementary level of development of such thinking operations as comparison, analysis, mental inference, by developing skills in working with household items, clothing, ensuring safety at home and on the street.

5. Formation and testing of people's knowledge of residential areas (especially at first we used clearer plot pictures, then simple ones);

6. Formation and testing of knowledge about the reflection of seasonal changes in nature in people's clothing;

7. Formation and testing of knowledge about living and inanimate nature;

8. Application of acquired knowledge in the first practical experience:

- to be able to behave correctly on the street, in public transport and observe road safety (follow adult commands);
- cooking simple dishes, setting the table for dinner (under the guidance of adults);
- learning how to properly store clothes in closets.

9. Development of skills: to be able to behave culturally and communicate with people;

10. Development of physical education and hygiene skills;
11. Conscious correct attitude to nature and the environment;
12. Act thoughtfully in extreme situations.

To the above, I would like to add that the kindergarten, which is the main social institution for an autistic child, is a microsocial environment. This environment can become an important factor after the child's psychocorrectional activities. But for the social adaptation of an autistic child, it is important to observe certain conditions in creating a microsocial environment. For this reason, the laws on democracy established by society open up new opportunities for modern special education. In this role, we observe the evolutionary process of development of the special education system. That is, the idea of children suffering from early autism syndrome, belonging to the group of atypical development, to be in an integrative educational environment together with their normally developing peers (after carrying out psychocorrectional measures) creates favorable conditions for the social adaptation of such children. In our time, the inclusion of atypical children in the process of integrative education is reflected in the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Education" (June 19, 2009) [12].

However, it is necessary to give this process an organized character. That is, having ensured the involvement of each child suffering from early autism syndrome in the method of psychocorrection from an early age, it is necessary to ensure his integration and adaptation to the social environment that is important for him. By applying integrative educational and upbringing practice in preschool educational institutions, children will receive pedagogical correction and medical and social assistance at the same time. At the same time, the development of integrative education creates a qualitatively new interaction between general education and special education. Already in such an environment (after carrying out psychocorrectional measures), a child with developmental delay will strive to reach the level of his peers with normal development in the social environment. But an institution that has established itself as a preschool and integrative education must have technical materials, teaching methods and programs for each age group, as well as qualified personnel. Such a state can partially solve the problem of social adaptation of a child with early autism syndrome. In addition, in such institutions, it is advisable to create isolated psychological and pedagogical correctional groups for children suffering from early autism syndrome. Then it is important to create compensatory groups and integrative groups for children with early autism syndrome. However, it can be considered important to provide technical resources, methodological instructions and special personnel for each type of activity carried out in each group.

As mentioned above, children with early childhood autism (ECA) have unique features of thinking. We see a special interest in mathematics and counting in them both at preschool and school age. This interest, by its very nature, makes the child focus on a short period of time. This makes the child think. In some cases, the child even tries to solve the problem. Often, the peculiarity of thinking characteristic of children suffering from ECA syndrome manifests itself at the level of mental retardation (IQ-) or mental retardation. Of course, in children with ECA everything is different. That is, at first glance, we mean a delay in the development of thinking as a result of the impact of the syndrome, its violation. It is more expedient to concentrate attention and make the work of thinking work synchronously with other functions, simply making the working activity of thinking work for a long time.

RESEARCH METHODS / МЕТОДИ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ

In order to analyze the methods for determining the level of social adaptation of a child with ECA syndrome, we would like to note some of the difficulties that the child faces in society:

1. The child does not look at the person addressed to him, as if he does not hear the command given to him;
2. The child suffering from ECA does not pay attention to the children in the group, does not watch them, ignores adults;
3. The child suffering from ECA cannot hold attention on an object or toy for more than 10-20 seconds;
4. The child suffering from ECA does not emotionally react to the successes of other children in the learning process, cannot control an object in his hand;
5. Social contacts of children suffering from ECA are not yet formed at preschool age;
6. Children suffering from ECA do not have a need to learn manual labor;
7. Children suffering from ECA have an unformed "I" Ego and have hyperfear;
8. A child suffering from ECA cannot master the rules of personal hygiene;
9. If a child suffering from ECA has inactive speech, he makes various inappropriate sounds;
10. Maladaptive behavior, accompanied by a minority of the need for communication, perception of objects and events in the environment, is reflected in conflicts.

RESEARCH RESULTS / РЕЗУЛЬТАТИ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ

Based on the above, it can be said that the adaptation of children suffering from the ECA syndrome to the social environment is possible only after carrying out certain developmental psychocorrectional measures at their intellectual level. We have noticed from our own experience that after working with children suffering from the ECA syndrome (conditionally 6 months, i.e., one should take into account the child's age, the period of psychocorrection carried out with him, etc.), as soon as he goes to kindergarten, he sits at the table with the children of this group, and he also wants to participate in active games with the children [4, p. 110–123].

1. Autistic children who have already received psychocorrectional measures develop an interest in the environment. For this reason, they are not indifferent to what is happening in the kindergarten, especially in the group. The main attention is paid to how children interact with each other using any toy. Under the supervision of the teacher, children strive to actively participate in such processes as exchanging things and toys with each other as friends or distributing roles in the game process [4, p. 110–123]. Seeing this process, a child suffering from ECA is indifferent to things in his house and room, but after attending kindergarten, i.e. becoming involved in the social environment, he begins to see “everyday life” in his own home and tries to become a participant in this life process.

2. After psychocorrectional measures, the child begins to obey the "command" of adults. Such children look up to their peers in age-social institutions such as kindergartens and "fearlessly" obey the "command" of adults addressing them. They begin to understand that there is no danger to their comrades in the teacher's instructions. For this reason, they also want to enjoy working in the teacher's team.

3. Unfortunately, speech development of children with ECA is not based on object activity. Speech development appears as a secondary asynchrony, a defect. Independence is preserved in the child's speech for a long time. Such independence of speech creates an obstacle to its identification with object activity. This situation is especially observed during the games of autistic children. The predominance of the affective-figurative sound component creates more conditions for maintaining speech independence, which gives the delay in speech development its own specificity. That is, the principle of the unity of acoustics and the meaning of the word disappears. Here the word is manifested not from the content, but from the phonetic side. Violation of the principle of the unity of acoustics and the meaning of the word creates a blurred connection between the object and the word [6].

CONCLUSIONS / ВИСНОВКИ

Based on the degree of severity and secondary speech development defect, scientists divided children suffering from ECA into three groups:

Children with severe developmental disorders, for whom communicative speech is impossible. The child manipulates individual sounds of an affective nature, and these sounds are in no way intended for social contact. In their speech, one can observe a large autoecholalia. In the early stages of normal development, one can see a case of short-term echolalia in the process of speech development, serving to enrich speech or adapt speech to a specific situation. Children with ECA can use only individual words in affective situations.

Less impaired speech development in children with ECA compared to normal speech development is observed in typical children. Such children may start to speak at a normal age. Elementary phrases are formed at 3-4 years, while speech development "stops"; the speech vocabulary consists of a set of individual verbal clichés. In this case, not only autoecholalia is observed, but also echolalia at the level of individual words and simple phrases, which will create opportunities for psychocorrectional work on speech development.

Children in this group have well-developed speech, a large vocabulary, developed phrasal speech, but they cannot speak freely and use only phrasal stereotypes, which creates the impression of "parrot" speech. Various degrees and nature of speech defects can be eliminated in work on psychocorrection and compensation. The work carried out to develop understanding of speech can be considered more successful.

Prospects for further research in this direction / Перспективи подальших досліджень у цьому напрямі. It is more difficult to monitor the development of the expressive side of speech with corrective measures. In particular, the possibilities of speech correction, clearly shown in the example, present great difficulties. This allows us to assume that, as in the case of motor acts, with a speech disorder there is also difficulty in consistently pronouncing individual words at the required level. For this reason, the development of speech as a means of social communication in children suffering from ECA can be considered the most necessary task.

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ПРОБЛЕМА СОЦІАЛЬНОЇ АДАПТАЦІЇ ДИТИНИ З РАННІМ ДИТЯЧИМ АУТИЗМОМ

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Анотація. У статті розглядається проблема соціальної адаптації дітей, які страждають на ранній дитячий аутизм (РДА) і мають затримку розвитку всіх психічних процесів внаслідок цього синдрому. На початку статті читач знайомиться з обговоренням досліджень, проведених вченими минулого століття, які працювали над цією проблемою. Ці дослідники точно визначили методи діагностики та психологічні особливості дітей із синдромом ЕКА. Вони віднесли таких дітей до атипової категорії, посиляючись на порушення структури особистості та емоційно-вольової сфери, спричинені синдромом ЕКА. Тим не менш, вчені також відзначили, що деякі психічні функції у цих дітей ізольовані, але залишаються «робочими». У статті висвітлено результати спостережень, які виявили вплив патології на поведінку та мовлення дітей із синдромом ЕКА. Вчені підкреслили, що у цих дітей спостерігається асинхронний розвиток мовлення та інших психічних функцій. Незалежність і самостійність у поведінці і мовленні зберігаються протягом тривалого часу. Іншими словами, неможливо спостерігати свідому поведінку або мову у дитини, яка страждає синдромом ЕКА. У статті особливо підкреслено важливість залучення таких дітей до психокорекційних заходів. У методологічному розділі статті рекомендується, щоб спеціалісти або батьки приділяли більше уваги певним характеристикам, які вважаються важливими у дітей із синдромом ЕКА. Ці особливості є основними факторами, що спричиняють проблеми соціальної адаптації у дітей-аутистів. З цієї причини ми вирішили реалізувати наші психокорекційні методи за допомогою діагностичних методик. При застосуванні цих діагностичних методів ми зосередили увагу на трьох параметрах поведінки та мовленнєвих характеристик дитини-аутиста. Ці характеристики оцінювали за допомогою бальної системи. На підставі отриманих результатів ми дійшли висновку, що першочерговою метою роботи з дитиною, яка страждає на ЕКА, методами психопедагогічної корекції має бути розвиток як

пізнавальної активності, так і соціальної адаптації дитини. Таким чином, психолого-педагогічна корекційна робота щодо соціальної адаптації дитини з ЕПР була розроблена за 12 критеріями та досягнута бажаного результату. При аутизмі люди уникають контакту з людьми та емоційно не розрізняють неживі та живі об'єкти, віддаючи перевагу неживим об'єктам і відкидаючи живих істот. Вони виявляють емоційний резонанс до навколишніх ситуацій, але виявляють байдужість і холодність навіть до своїх близьких. Поряд з цими рисами, вони також демонструють високий ступінь страху та чутливості до гучних звуків. Характерні сенсорні стимули, такі як тактильні, температурні, світлові та звукові, неприємні та травматичні для цих дітей. Отже, стимули, прийнятні для нормальної здорової дитини, стають джерелами емоційного дискомфорту для аутичної дитини. Найсильнішим подразником для дитини-аутиста є людське обличчя. Аутичні страхи спотворюють уявлення про матеріальний світ. Дослідження показали, що ці діти не сприймають предмети свого оточення як єдине ціле, а скоріше за окремими афективними особливостями.

Ключові слова: особистість; соціалізація; соціальні; адаптація; ранній дитячий аутизм (РДА); психопедагогічна корекція; середовище.

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