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CORRECTION OF FEARS IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN FROM LARGE AND SMALL FAMILIES

The urgency of the problem of identifying and correcting children's fears today against the backdrop of instability in our society is a very important concern – a modern child faces a lot of unfavorable factors affecting his/her development. The article describes the research aiming to reveal dominant fears and ways of their elimination in children of preschool age from large (having more than two children) and small (having less than three children) families. The following research methods were applied: "Fears in Children" questionnaire (Kuzmina, 2000), "Fears in Little Houses" by Panfilova (Zakharov, 2000), Zakharov's "My Fears" projective method (Zakharov, 2000). As a result of the research it was found that the correction should be carried out with children from small families, because they have higher indicators of the number of fears. For this purpose, a corrective program was developed to help children overcome their fears. It includes three components: work with parents, with a pedagogical team, and with a child. As a result of the program's approbation, it has been revealed that it contributes to the elimination and prevention of child fears: by certain indicators, some types of fears have decreased by almost 1.5-2 times, and some types of fears have disappeared. The results obtained make it possible to promulgate that carrying out correctional measures will positively influence the mental state of the child. When comparing the results of the study to identify the dominant fears in children from large families and small children, it can be argued that children from large families are less prone to fears, they are more socially adapted, sociable, and less anxious.

Keywords: children's fears, types of fears, children from large and small families, correctional program, overcoming fears.

Introduction

Today, the issue of identifying and correcting children's fears is very important in the context of socio-economic and socio-political changes taking place in the society. In a situation of social instability, a modern child is facing a lot of unfavorable factors that can not only slow down the development of his/her potential abilities, but also harm the gained development. Therefore, special attention to the problem of fears is paid in the works of lots of psychologists, educators and psychotherapists, who note the increase of the number of children with diverse fears, increased excitability and anxiety.

In recent years, as compared to the previous period, the number of children suffering from fears has increased significantly, as evidenced by special studies. O. I. Zakharov believes that the cause of children's fears may be parents' and educators' numerous prohibitions, as well as their aggression concerning the child (Zakharov, 2000). Psychologists A. S. Spivakovska, T. M. Mishyna, G. Berlin stressed that one of the most common causes of child fears is the wrong upbringing of a child in the family, difficult family relationships (Spivakovska, 2000; Berlin, 2004).

According to scientific sources, psychological changes in children with fears affect their studying at preschool institutions and the process of adaptation to school. According to G. Eberlein, the presence of persistent fears in children shows that they are unable to cope with their

feelings, control them when they get frightened (Eberlein, 1981).

Children's fears in one way or another are due to age-specific features and have a temporary nature. However, constant fears and those that are hardly experienced by the child indicate a nervous system issue, the parents' wrong upbringing methods, family conflicts, and in general are a sign of deprivation. Therefore, psychologists pay great attention to the problem of the phenomenon of fears (Zakharov, 2000; Izard, 1991). Most of the reasons, as psychologists point out, lies in the field of family relationships, such as indulgence, inconsistency in upbringing, negative or too demanding attitude towards the child, which form anxiety and hostility towards the world (Zakharov, 2000; Kuzmin, 2000; Spivakovska, 2000).

In spite of the fact that this issue has been sufficiently examined in psychological and pedagogical scientific literature, in our opinion, the predominant types of child fears in different age groups of children are understudied, the problems of correction and prevention of fears in children of preschool age are considered fragmentary, which determined the subject of this research.

Aim and Tasks

The paper aims to distinguish dominant types of fears in pre-school children from large and small families, and develop a program for their overcoming and prevention.

The following tasks are set: to analyze available sci-

entific information on the subject of the research; to conduct a study of the prevalence of fears in preschool children from large and small families; to develop and test a correction program for preventing and overcoming fears in children which can be used by preschool teachers and parents.

Research Methods

The research was conducted at the kindergartens of the “Habad” and “Or Sameah” communities, Odessa. The sample involved practically healthy children of 5-6 years old. The children were from religious families and have fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters.

According to the purpose of the study, the entire empirical program consisted of the following three stages:

The first stage was the summative experiment. At this stage, the following methods were applied:

- “Fears in Children” questionnaire (Kuzmina, 2000),
- “Fears in Little Houses” by M.A. Panfilova (Zakharov, 2000), which aims to identify and clarify the prevailing types of fears (fear of darkness, loneliness, death, medical fears). Before helping children overcome fears, it is necessary to find out the whole range of fears, and the fears they are inclined to.

Each child was offered two houses – red and black. They were asked to “settle” their fears in these houses: “not terrible” in the red house, and “the terrible ones” in the black one. After performing the task, each child was asked to close the black house with the key (draw it), and to throw it away or to damage it. Analysis of the results: the experimenter calculates fears in the black house and

compares them with the age-old norms distinguished by M. N. Kuzmina (Kuzmina, 2000),

- “My Fears” projective method (Zakharov, 2000), aimed at identifying the number of groups of child fears, is conducted in the form of interviews, conversations. The results are based on responses about the number of fears in children. A large number of different fears is an important indicator, and such children should be given a risk status and engaged in special work, including with a child neuropsychiatrist.

The second stage (a formative experiment) included psycho-correction work (a psycho-correction program for preschool teachers for the elimination of fears in children).

The third stage was the control one. It was based on “Fears in Little Houses” technique by M.A. Panfilova (Zakharov, 2000), and “My Fears” projective method (Zakharov, 2000).

Research Results

The data presented in Table 1 show that children from large and small families were distributed equally, by 50%, respectively. It should be noted that 54.2% of children live in satisfactory conditions, 45.8% of children are in good conditions.

Good conditions presuppose that a child has his/her own room, toys, playground, bed. When a child lives in satisfactory conditions, it means that he/she shares a room with parents or brothers/sisters (including toys, and a bed).

Table 1.

Distribution of Preschoolers with Fears according to Family Types and Living Conditions

Total		Family types		Living conditions	
		Large family	Small family	Satisfactory	Good
48	Absolute	24	24	26	22
100	Respective (%)	50	50	54.2	45.8

The results of the first stage of the research were confirmed by the findings of the parents’ survey using “Fear in Children” questionnaire (Kuzmin, 2000).

According to the results of work with the children from large families, the following results of children’s statuses were revealed:

- not anxious - 41.6%,
- not afraid to stay alone at home - 37.5%,
- sociable - 54.2%,
- not withdrawing into oneself and still trusting adults - 33.3%,
- enjoy watching horror films - 54.2%,
- have no complaints about any fears – 29.2%.

According to the results of work with the parents from small families, the following children’s statuses were revealed:

- anxious - 66.7%,
- afraid to stay alone at home - 62.5%,
- not sociable – 54.2%,
- withdrawing into oneself and not trusting adults -

50%,

- do not like to watch horror films - 70.8%,
- have complaints about any fears – 66.7%.

So, based on the answers of the parents, we came to the conclusion that psycho-correction work should be carried out with children from small families, because they have greater manifestations of fears.

For example, in the children from small families, the fears of nightmares and darkness are predominant because they sleep at night alone, apart from their parents; while their parents tend to hyperprotection in the upbringing process. We carried out psycho-correction work with such children.

To achieve the research aim, a psycho-correction program for the elimination of fears was designed, which included:

- work with the parents of children with manifestations of fears;
- work with a pedagogical team teaching children with fears;

- work with a child having this problem.

The first direction presupposed providing parents with information about the peculiarities of child fears, their reasons and the role of parents in their prevention and correction.

The second direction (work with the pedagogical team) included the following types of work: lectures on the psychophysiological features of the child, the emergence and impact of fears on the person; training sessions for educators, where they could get acquainted with the methods of correction and prevention of child fears.

The third direction included psycho-correction work with children, which consisted of games, exercises, fairy-

tale therapy and drawing of fears (Hnezdilov, 2004; Zakharov, 2000; Zinkevich-Yevstihnieieva, 2000).

A comparative analysis of the research results before and after the psycho-correction work with children from small families using O. I. Zakharov's "My Fears" inventory is presented in Figures 1 (girls) and 2 (boys).

According to the data presented in Figure 1, the indicators of fears in the girls from small families changed before and after psycho-correction work as follows: medical fears decreased by 8.3%, physical - by 4.2%, fear of death - by 4.1%, fears of nightmares and darkness - by 4.2%.

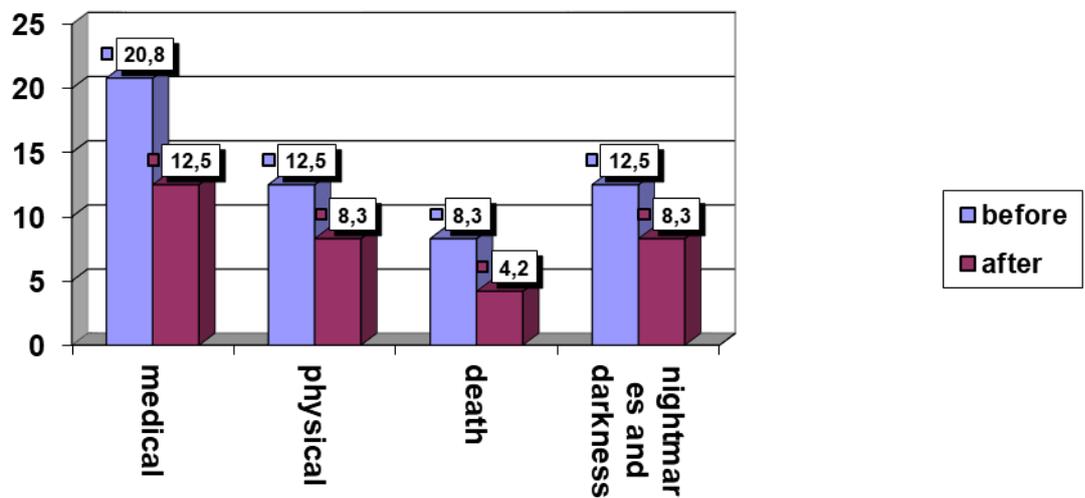


Fig. 1. Distribution of Fears of Girls from Small Families before and after Psycho-Correction Program Implementation

According to the results presented in Figure 2, the indices of the fears in boys from small families changed before and after the psycho-correction work: medical fears decreased by 8.4%, physical - by 8.3%, fear of death remained the same - 4.2%, and fears of nightmares and darkness decreased by 8.3%.

Consequently, the psycho-correction program helped most children overcome their fears, they became less

afraid of medical and physical issues, fear of nightmares and darkness decreased, but the fear of death in boys remained unchanged.

A comparative analysis of the research results before and after the psycho-correction work with the children from small families using the "Fears in the Small Houses" inventory is presented in Figures 3 (girls) and 4 (boys).

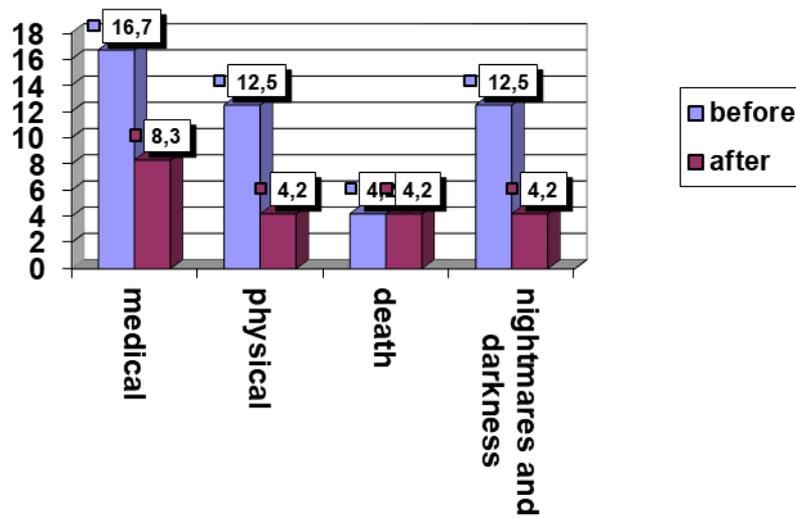


Fig. 2. Distribution of Fears of Boys from Small Families before and after Psycho-Correction Program Implementation

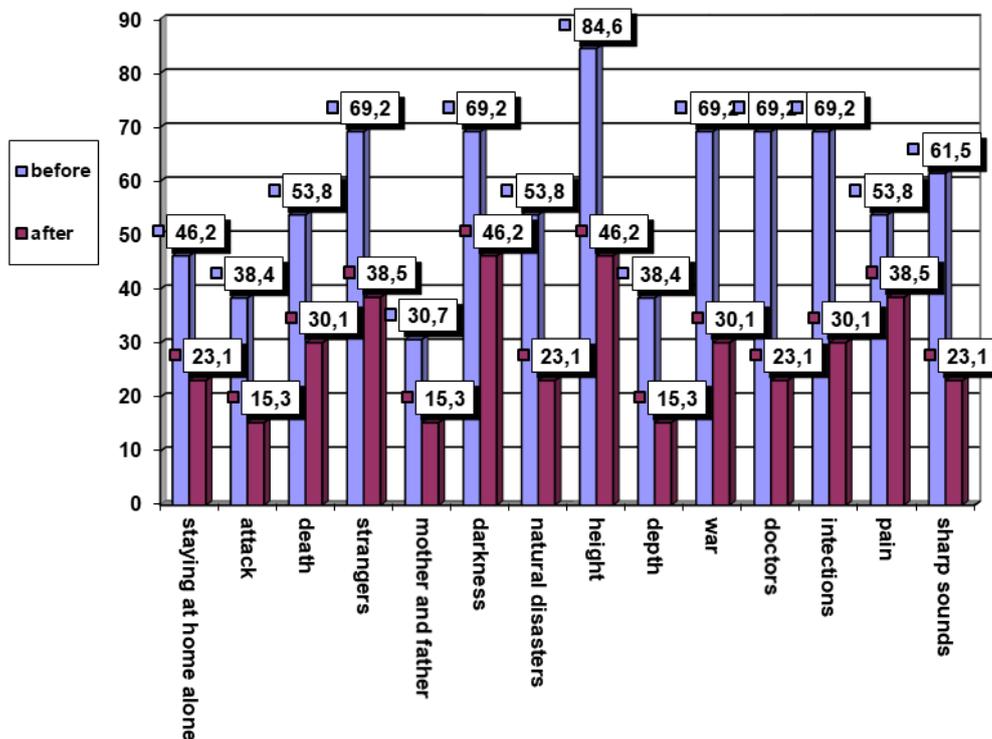


Fig. 3. Distribution of Fears of Girls from Small Families Using “Fears in Little Houses” inventory by M. A. Panfilova before and after Psycho-Correction Work

According to the results presented in Figure 3, the indicators of the fears of the girls from small families changed before and after the psycho-corrective work in the following way: fears of staying alone at home, attack, depth decreased by 23.1%, fear of death - by 23.7%,

strangers, disasters - by 30.7%, fear of a mother or father - by 15.4%, darkness - by 23%, height, sharp sounds - by 38.4%, war, injuries - by 39.1%, doctors - by 46.1%, pain - by 15.3%.

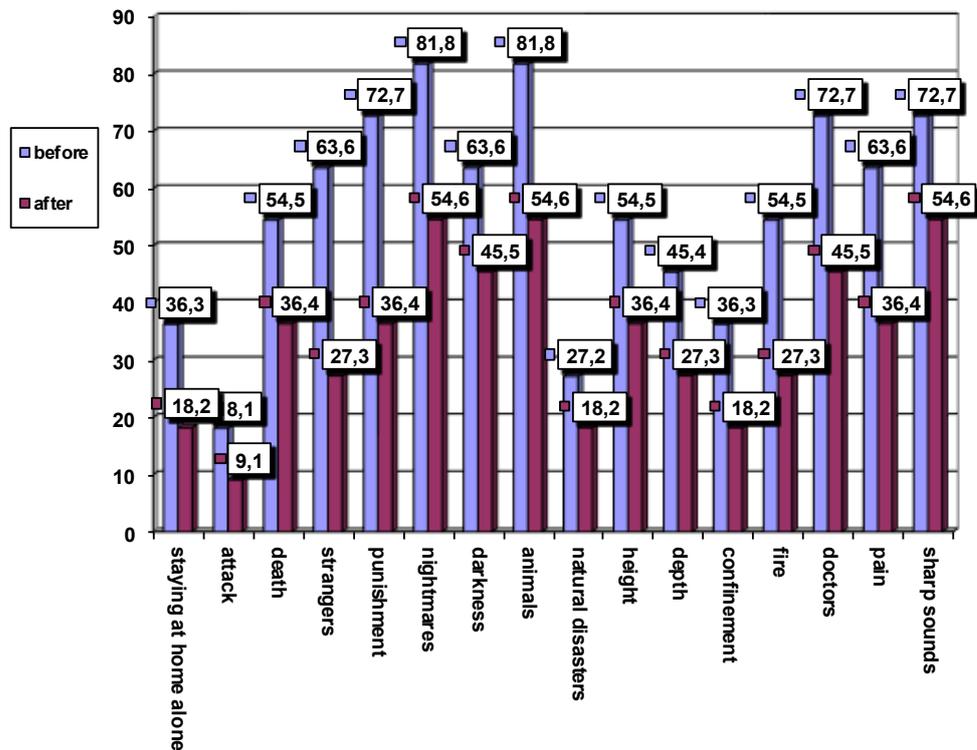


Fig. 4. Distribution of Fears of Boys from Small Families using “Fears in Little Houses” inventory by M. A. Panfilova before and after Psycho-Correction Work

According to the results presented in Figure 4, the indicators of fears of the boys from small families changed before and after psycho-correction work as follows: fear of staying at home alone, depth, death, darkness, height, sharp sounds, closed space (confinement) decreased by 18.1% respectively, fears of attack, natural disasters - by 9%, strangers, punishment - by 36.3%, doctors, pain, nightmares, animals, fire - by 27.2%.

Thus, the psycho-correction program helped most children to overcome their fears; they became less afraid of staying alone at home, of depth, death, darkness, height, natural disasters, etc.

Conclusions

1. It has been found that a greater number of types of fears and the frequency of their manifestation are noted in children from small families as compared to the children from the large ones. The main dominant factor in the emergence of fears in such children is having a separate room, which exacerbates the susceptibility to negative information that forms fears.

Children from large families emphasized the fear of war, which is conditioned by the unfavorable situation in the country, negative influence of mass media, aggressive content of cartoons. The fear of death in this category of children was not detected at all, as well as the fear of nightmares and

darkness, as children live together, do not remain alone and are not characterized by a high level of anxiety.

The children from large families are less prone to fears, more socially adapted and sociable.

2. A psycho-correction program for overcoming fears for children from small families has been developed, which includes three components: work with parents, pedagogical team, and a child.

3. According to the results of using O. I. Zakharov’s method the girls had the following fears: medical (12.5%), physical, nightmares and darkness (8.3%, respectively), the level of which significantly decreased after the introduction of the correction program (by 8.3% and 4.2% respectively).

In boys, after the psycho-correction work implementation, medical fear remained predominant (8.3%), but its indicator significantly decreased (by 2 times).

4. According to M.A. Panfilova’s inventory, after psycho-correction work the girls’ fears of height and darkness, strangers and pain remained but their manifestation decreased significantly - height (almost 2 times), darkness (by 23%), strangers (by 2 times), pain (by 15.3%).

In boys, according to the results of the psycho-correction work, the fears of nightmares, animals, sharp sounds, darkness, doctors remained the dominant ones,

but their level decreased considerably – of nightmares and animals - in 1.5 times, sharp sounds - by 17.6%, darkness - in 1.4 times, doctors - in 2 times.

It has been proved that the psycho-correction pro-

gram contributes to the elimination and prevention of fears, which in general positively affects the mental state of the child.

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КОРЕКЦІЯ СТРАХІВ У ДІТЕЙ ДОШКІЛЬНОГО ВІКУ З БАГАТОДІТНИХ ТА НЕБАГАТОДІТНИХ СІМЕЙ

Актуальність проблеми виявлення і корекції дитячих страхів сьогодні на тлі нестабільності в суспільстві є вельми важливою – на сучасну дитину обрушується безліч несприятливих чинників, що гальмують розвиток потенційних можливостей особистості. У статті представлені результати дослідження домінуючих страхів і апробації розробленої програми їх подолання у дітей дошкільного віку з багатодітних і небагатодітних сімей; подано класифікацію виявлених дитячих страхів, проаналізовано види домінуючих страхів у дівчаток і хлопчиків, причини їх виникнення. Дослідження включало три етапи: перший етап – констатуючий експеримент, що включав анкетування «Страхи у дітей» (Кузьміна, 2000), «Страхи в будиночках» М.А. Панфілової (Захаров, 2000), проектну методику А. И. Захарова «Мої страхи» (Захаров, 2000). Другий етап – корекційна робота. Третій етап – контрольний. На підставі проведеного первинного дослідження встановлено, що корекцію необхідно проводити з дітьми з небагатодітних сімей, оскільки їм властиві більш високі показники кількості страхів. Для цього була розроблено і впроваджено корекційну програму з подолання страхів у таких дітей, що включала три складових: робота з батьками, педагогічним колективом, дитиною з цією проблемою. Було встановлено, що програма сприяє усуненню і профілактиці дитячих страхів: за певними показниками деякі види страхів зменшилися майже в 1,5-2 рази, а деякі види зникли зовсім. Отримані результати дозволяють стверджувати, що проведення корекційних заходів загалом позитивно впливатиме на психічний стан дитини. Порівняння результатів

дослідження домінуючих страхів у дітей з багатодітних і небагатодітних сімей показало, що діти з багатодітних сімей менш схильні до страхів, вони більш соціально адаптовані, комунікабельні та менш тривожні.

Ключові слова: дитячі страхи, види страхів, діти з багатодітних та небагатодітних сімей, корекційна програма, подолання страхів.

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CORRECTION OF PHYSICAL FITNESS OF SENIOR SCHOOL STUDENTS LIVING IN RADIATION ENVIRONMENT

The deterioration of environmental living conditions has actualized the problem of preserving and strengthening the health of people. The research aims to study the adaptation capabilities of motor activity of senior school students living under conditions of radioecological factors' influence depending on the level of their physical activity; as well as to study possibilities of their correction by means of health improving physical education. According to the research results, it has been found that increased motor activity does not always have a positive impact of physical fitness. Not only low but also the increased physical activity is not adequate for a senior school student's body. It promotes stress adaptation mechanisms and functional capabilities reduction. The carried out monitoring detected that only senior school students having average and above average levels of motor activity have got satisfactory degree of adaptation. When planning and arranging physical education lessons at school, one should take into account the current status of students and individual adaptation characteristics to physical exercises. It allows implementing health improving effect of the lessons as efficiently as possible. The use of health improving physical education means at the lessons of physical training for senior school students allowed forming a high level of adaptation capabilities and increasing non-specific body resistance. As a result, it helps to reduce the negative influence of adverse radiation ecological factors.

Keywords: *adaptation capabilities, senior school students, adverse radiation ecological conditions, health-improving physical culture.*

Introduction

More than 30 years have already passed from April 26, 1986, since the tragic day of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident, more than one generation of children have been raised, though despite this fact, the issue of unfavorable radiation situation is still relevant for a number of regions in Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia. This necessitates the search for effective means of preserving and strengthening the health of people living in such ecological conditions. And this is of the greatest importance for children and adolescents who determine the future of each nation.

It should be emphasized that not only radiation is an environmental factor that can worsen the level of people's health. Each region has its own socio-economic conditions, forming its own set of environmental factors that cause a decrease in people's adaptive capacity and increase in diseases incidence (Kaznacheev, et al., 1980; Blair, Brodneyn, 1999). In addition, for school-age children, studying is also a factor that provokes health deterioration. Constant "improvement" of the educational process, intensification of learning through the use of various innovative pedagogical technologies – all of these do not contribute to strengthening and improving the health of