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Work with Children at Risk in a Modern Educational Space

Article's History:

Received: 17.09.2021

Revised: 18.10.2021

Accepted: 21.11.2021

Suggested Citation:

Mykhed, I.V. (2021). Work with children at risk in a modern educational space. *Scientific Bulletin of Mukachevo State University. Series "Pedagogy and Psychology"*, 7(4), 43-49.

Abstract. The relevance of studying the methods of working with children at risk is extremely high, both for ordinary teachers and school psychologists. The number of children at risk is constantly growing, resulting in the need to analyse the mechanism of their upbringing within educational institutions. In addition, consideration of this issue is extremely important for society, because by choosing the right approach of the teacher to such students, there is an opportunity to re-educate them and build their respect for the norms of society and promote their personality as a law-abiding citizen. Thus, the purpose of the study is to analyse the theoretical concept of risk group, to establish its features, to investigate the criteria by which students get to them, and to consider current methodological measures for organising educational work with such children and compare them with modern educational space. To achieve this goal, a set of methods was used, including both general and pedagogical, namely: logical analysis, synthesis, comparative analysis, deduction, pedagogical observation, morphological method, and analysis scientific literature. The results obtained during the study can be divided into two components, namely theoretical and practical. According to the first, it is necessary to establish the essence of the concept of children at risk, to reveal its features and factors that affect it. The practical component is the analysis of current tools and approaches used in working with students at risk, including establishing their effectiveness and determining the appropriateness of their use in modern educational space and, accordingly, making recommendations for their improvement. The practical significance of the study lies in the fact that, when teachers or social psychologists use the methods developed in it, the process of changing students' attitudes and consolidating in them the values that will help them to become full members of society who will respect the rights and freedoms of other citizens and, accordingly, the social norms that have been established

Keywords: education, educational process, pedagogy, deviant behaviour, teachers

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INTRODUCTION

Methodological approaches and materials used by teachers during the educational process require constant updating and development. Admittedly, this is conditioned by the fact that the modern educational space is quite dynamic and, accordingly, it is constantly changing, which directly affects all its subjects. Therefore, consideration of this issue, namely working with children at risk in the modern educational process, is a priority in pedagogy. Accordingly, its importance is explained by the presence of a special subject of education, namely students who are characterised by a certain maladaptation and deviant behaviour, which

is certainly different from the normal social behaviour of citizens [1]. In this context, it is appropriate to define the concept of children at risk, in particular, it can be described as a separate group of students who, due to certain life circumstances, are exposed to negative external influences from the family or even society with its criminal elements directly causing maladaptation and deviation from the established social and legal norms in society. After all, it is the term risk that accurately describes the characteristics of this category of students. It can be revealed in several aspects, in particular, as a danger to the community, respectively,

created by the subjects of this group, or as a direct danger to the child conditioned by the risk to their life, health, and living conditions for unhindered social development [2].

The analysis of statistical data shows that in almost every educational institution out of the total number of students there are 7-20 children belonging to the above category [3]. Accordingly, about 430 thousand children are registered with law enforcement agencies, in particular in units aimed at preventing juvenile delinquency. Moreover, approximately 100,000 juveniles commit crimes each year. Accordingly, this situation requires its resolution as soon as possible, in particular by changing the current methodological tools used to raise such children. However, to form recommendations or algorithms for the development of the mechanism of raising children at risk, it is necessary to explore its main elements and features expressed in the daily activities of the teacher and based on this, to identify deficiencies and gaps that negatively reflect in the learning process [3].

Nowadays, common types of work of teachers with students at risk include: keeping records of children at risk, forming and consolidating general curricula for the above category of students by class teachers or school psychologists, combining group and individual work with such children, proper control over social and economic conditions in which the child is and develops in extracurricular activities. Accordingly, such approaches, which are reflected in a large number of educational materials and recommendations, are extremely common, but quite general and to some extent even theoretical in nature [4].

Given the above, it can be argued that the effectiveness of the described measures is low, this is directly related to the fact that most of this issue is rather underinvestigated, it is usually considered superficially, without analysing the necessary features and important elements. Accordingly, the development of established types of work with children at risk is possible only if they are individualised and concentrated directly on the student [5]. Thus, *the purpose of the study* is to establish an algorithm for developing a system of methodological measures to work with students at risk, and increase their impact on the minds of children and, accordingly, promote their re-education and normal social development. To achieve this goal it is necessary to perform the *following tasks*: to consider the concept of children at risk, to identify the main factors influencing the separation of a particular category of children, to establish the dependence of this concept with other social factors, to investigate modern methods, identify their shortcomings, and suggest ways to address them.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The issue under investigation necessitated the systematic use of a number of methods, as it is quite broad in scope, and therefore requires in-depth study of each of its elements. In addition, the field of scientific work is pedagogical, so it used not only general theoretical research methods, but also pedagogical, which allowed considering the features

of the issue in this context. The paper uses the method of logical analysis, which is paramount, because it is based on the differentiation of one concept of risk group into its individual structural and substantive components. Using this method, the theoretical concept of children at risk is revealed, and several dimensions are established in which it is expedient to consider it to fully understand its significance. Based on the method of synthesis, separate parts of the mentioned subject were cooperated, which allowed considering all issues as a whole object and identify gaps and shortcomings that are reflected in the work of teachers. Using the method of synthesis, logical results were identified, which carry a certain scientific originality and are important for further research on this topic. At the same time, the method of comparative analysis played an important role in the work process, because it was compared with the methods and exercises used in the educational process by teachers when working with children at risk, with the conditions of modern educational space. Accordingly, on its basis, recommendations were developed to improve the effectiveness of existing measures and new practices were formed that will certainly be useful in the process of their implementation.

As for the structure of the study, its content and essence, all these elements directly depend on the method of deduction, which is one of the main approaches. Thus, the course of research is formed in this way, namely from general to specific, according to the theoretical general concept of risk group and persons belonging to it, to the directly pedagogical tools and approaches used in working with them. Moreover, to use statistics on the number of children at risk and the factors influencing their size, the method of pedagogical observation was used, which allowed considering the data generated by teachers on the behaviour and actions of such students. In addition, a special method used in the research is the morphological method, based on which a number of analytical actions were implemented, in particular, analysis of the number of persons belonging to risk groups. It provides an opportunity to monitor the quality of tools used by educators to work with students at risk, and to identify their consequences and effective ways to solve this problem.

The study was carried out in three stages. At the first stage, the theoretical basis of the specified subject was considered, the basic concepts, in particular risk groups, were revealed, their elements and signs, the factors influencing their occurrence and change were defined. In addition, the work plan, the purpose, and the basic tasks were developed. At the second stage, the methods of practical implementation of the stated issue were analysed, in particular by studying the current exercises and methods that affect the level of effectiveness of their implementation. At the third stage, the obtained results were cooperated into conclusions, and also recommendations were formed for development of the mechanism of work of teachers with students of risk group, according to modern conditions of educational environment.

RESULTS

In today's world, addressing the health of children and adolescents is indeed one of the highest priorities for community. Considering that health consists of several components, namely: physical, mental, social, and moral, it should be emphasised that for a minor to develop fully, each of these elements must be at a high level of development and, accordingly, they must all be interrelated. However, if one of these components is ignored or violated, it is possible to change the child's behaviour, which will be contrary to generally accepted social norms and principles, in particular, it may manifest itself in the form of immoral or illegal acts. In addition, the deformation of the child's consciousness and, accordingly, their attitude to society and the norms enshrined in it, is possible in the process of social, political, or economic crisis. That is why, assessing the current conditions, it can be established that this problem is global and widespread not only in Ukraine but also abroad. Thus, the common features of communities characterised by political or socio-economic stability are the spread of phenomena such as social exclusion of children, the development of tendencies among minors to immoral behaviour, which increases crime, prostitution, drug addiction, beggary, homelessness.

Moreover, in some cases, the family does not provide the child with the necessary conditions for its normal social development, but on the contrary creates an environment that is dangerous for the life and upbringing of children. As a result, a large number of minors, due to the negligent attitude of their parents to their responsibilities, receive problems of a physical, mental and social nature. In addition, this factor usually affects the child in cooperation with deteriorating environmental conditions, wars, internal and external migration and other factors that, respectively, in the future put the child at risk.

Therefore, having established the nature of the establishment and emergence of this category of minors belonging to risk groups, it is advisable to reveal the essence of this concept and to establish certain features and characteristics. Children at risk are a category of children who, due to certain circumstances in their lives, are more prone than other categories to negative external social influences, which cause their maladaptation. This category of children requires special attention from teachers, educators, social educators, social workers, and other professionals. Problem children without conventional forms of developmental anomalies experience learning difficulties are at increased risk of social maladaptation, are potential violators of public peace, which causes social and legal problems [6].

Given the above, it is possible to form a list of categories of minors who are directly at risk. This is especially true for children with developmental problems that are not conditioned by clinical and pathological characteristics, respectively, such as persons brought up in isolation from society, and those whose level of knowledge and abilities do not meet the basic for their age. In addition, the described group includes persons who have a pronounced deviation

in character, and who are characterised by psychopath-like behaviour, thus, their uncontrolled activities can be dangerous to society. Furthermore, this category of children includes those who are characterised by manifestations of social, psychological, and pedagogical maladaptation, as they have difficulty establishing communication with others and, accordingly, cannot fully develop in the social space [7]. Minors who have been left without parental care due to certain life circumstances should be considered separately as children at risk, since this category of persons is extremely vulnerable in a psychological context and requires an individual approach in the process of upbringing and education. Absolutely opposite to the previous category of children are those from disadvantaged, conflicting, antisocial families in need of socio-economic and psychological assistance. The difference between these groups is quite clear, as in fact some have parents and others do not, but despite this, both categories belong to at-risk groups and are therefore to some extent dangerous to society [8].

To investigate the mechanism of educational work with children at risk, it is necessary to identify and disclose the factors that lead to the attribution of persons to such groups. This step is extremely important, because by correctly identifying the reasons for children to fall into such categories, the teacher will have the opportunity to understand the psychological characteristics of a particular person and, accordingly, to choose an effective approach. Thus, the most common are socio-economic factors, as they affect the child from birth and in the process of development. Such factors include: financial problems of the family; aggressive psychological situation in the family; immoral lifestyle followed by parents; asociality and maladaptation of individual family members to community life; deviant environment of the minor. The influence of these factors on the child is direct, because the child is constantly exposed to such conditions, and consequently their world view is deformed to a certain extent, since the model of a family and a normal citizen is distorted in their mind, and therefore in the future the child will adhere to these very foundations and lead an immoral way of life [9]. No less common factor is psychological, which certainly affects the psychological state of the child, causes certain obstacles to their development. In particular, it is characterised by the following properties: the child has problems with self-perception, has neurotic reactions, characterised by emotional instability and difficulties in communication, contact, and interaction with both peers and adults. The prevalence of this factor today is conditioned by the high level of use of social networks by children, because there they are often subject to bullying and, consequently, unconstructive criticism, which is reflected in their minds [10]. In addition, it is important to pay attention to the pedagogical factor, which over time is becoming less common in Ukrainian society. Its essence is that the child is not provided with sufficient education; the content of educational and methodical programmes used in educational institutions is not correlated with the psychophysiological characteristics of children;

low level of motivation to learn in children, unwillingness to develop in various ways, revealing their own creative abilities. This factor has been dominant among others in the last ten years in Ukrainian society, which was largely conditioned by the implementation of post-Soviet approaches in schools, which were rather ineffective. However, in recent years this trend has changed somewhat, as a large number of educational reforms are implemented, which require bringing curricula in line with the conditions of modern educational space, which at an early stage can be traced to positive results [11].

Given the above, it is possible to form signs that are inherent in the concept of “children at risk”. In particular, this refers to certain deviations from normal social behaviour in minors. The severity of re-education should also be included to attributes of a risk group; in most cases, this attribute is decisive among others, because if a child is in breach of the norms of established behaviour, they are not placed in the above-mentioned category of students, but if it is impossible to correct or change their behaviour, the placing of a person in a risk group is inevitable. It is extremely important to realise that these children are not bad by nature, which is why this idea is revealed in the sign of individual approach, which is the obligation of teachers working with such children to pay special attention to them and take care to shape their normal, social future [12].

DISCUSSION

As a rule, when talking about children at risk, the attention is focused on them in the context of pedagogical problems. Accordingly, quite often only one aspect of the phenomenon is taken as the basic component, i.e., the level of difficulty of working with such students. At the same time, the other side of the phenomenon is no less important, namely the difficulties and obstacles that exist in the lives of children themselves, the difficulty of establishing their relationships with family, teachers, friends, peers, and adults. Thus, they are quite often not so much unwilling as unable to learn at a high level and therefore have to behave because, as a rule, this is conditioned by the lack of a behavioural pattern among their close environment [13]. Difficulties and shortcomings in children's behaviour are completely different, respectively, in some they are more pronounced, and in others less. This largely depends on the fact that the period of accumulation and establishment of negative experiences in adolescents is much longer than in younger students, and even more so in preschoolers. This is why such behaviour of adolescents, namely those that are complicated and characterised by persistent deviations from established social and cultural norms in society, due to constant repetition becomes quite stable, so it becomes increasingly difficult to overcome. Therefore, the practical basis of the study is to investigate measures that will not only help identify children with complex behaviour, but also help to re-educate them and, accordingly, exclude them from risk groups so that they can continue to develop fully in society and not be dangerous for others [14].

Thus, the first category of people to analyse is preschoolers. Nowadays, a fairly common tool for working with children at risk in preschool is the development of programmes of individualised work, which to some extent aims to create psychological and pedagogical conditions for the harmonious development of each pupil. In general, the programme is complex in nature; in addition, its prerequisite is to consider the age characteristics of children, including older preschoolers of 5-7 years old, in the process of its development and consolidation. The main task of such a programme is correction, i.e., re-education of students, development of their cognitive, emotional and personal sphere, work on emotional state, and in particular such emotions as: aggression, hyperactivity, anxiety. In most cases, the programme of individual work consists of three or four blocks, respectively, its implementation is carried out in stages [15].

It is worth noting that the use of such programmes can be traced not only in preschools, but also in schools, so it is advisable to consider their structure in a certain relationship. Therefore, at the first stage, as a rule, preliminary information about the child is collected and analysed, this process is necessary to identify children at risk. At this stage, certain diagnostic mechanisms are often used, which are to study the problems of cognitive and emotional and personal development of children, including both preschoolers and schoolchildren. Such mechanisms are quite broad in nature, so it is advisable to disclose their content. Thus, these include individually designed diagnostic approaches for in-depth analysis of different types of memory, attention, thinking, and imagination; moreover, various types of questionnaires, surveys, observation schemes, projective techniques such as storytelling are important in their implementation, and as a result help to establish the level of anxiety, aggressiveness, and hyperactivity of the child. In addition, this mechanism includes diagnostic research maps and individual development maps, which can be used to structure the information and data about the child, so that the teacher can analyse its features and form an individual work plan [16]. At the second stage, individually formed correctional and developmental classes and exercises aimed at the development of control of mental processes and the correction of psychosocial conditions of the child. Examples of such activities are those based on health technologies, namely: psychological tasks and games for the development of cognitive processes, including logic tasks, puzzles, didactic and verbal games, energy games, finger games, creative exercises and relaxation [17].

Given the above, the study suggests that the programme should include practical work of children, such as work in notebooks or creative activities, as this will allow in the context of one lesson to solve several problems, and thus combine into a single system of mental disorders, which will allow facilitate the development of children of all ages. Therefore, it is proposed to use sets of exercises to develop perception, attention, memory, thinking, and imagination,

which in turn can be used not only by rehabilitators but also teachers or even parents. Such exercises include: psychogymnastics, art-therapy, fairy-tale therapy, dance therapy, therapy with the use of kinetic or ordinary sand, game therapy, puppet therapy, and methods of auto-relaxation, self-regulation, and self-massage. An important condition in the implementation of such measures is their use, if possible, in cooperation with modern technologies, as it will speed up the process of re-education, and will be more effective because it will be more interesting for preschoolers and students, and thus increase their interest in participation in the proposed games [18].

The third stage of implementation of individual educational programmes for children at risk is most pronounced in schools, because the interaction between teachers and parents is closer and more serious, in contrast to preschool educational institutions. In the end, a corner of the teacher-psychologist is formed in every classroom or special room, which houses various stands, screens, or folders, informing parents and teachers about existing disorders in children's development and ways to correct them. In addition, this stage is characterised by the fact that, as a rule, the class teacher visits the students' homes regularly, so that the teacher can monitor their socio-economic and psychological conditions for development, and accordingly respond in a timely manner to the dangers that may arise. Furthermore, at this stage, the interaction between the school and parents is established, which is extremely important, because with their joint cooperation, the child is usually re-educated faster and gets out of risk groups.

The fourth stage is final in the process of education and training of children at risk, as it consists in the re-diagnosis of children and, accordingly, the identification of positive dynamics in their development. This stage is crucial because it is not only about excluding the student from the risk group, but also about rethinking their own behaviour, its social danger and inadequacy. Accordingly, the child should strive not only to get out of the risk group, but also to fully realise the importance of compliance with social norms established in society. In addition, after being excluded from this category of persons, the student is supervised for a certain period of time to monitor the process of their socialisation and adaptation, with timely assistance if the student has certain problems and obstacles [14].

Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the determinants in the development and consolidation of an individual programme of re-education of children with complex behaviour are: involvement in this process of all participants in educational activities; use of correctional and developmental classes for children; consolidation of poster information for parents; exchange of experience and development of recommendations from teachers to parents and vice versa. In addition, it is proposed to expand the game base, which should include more than 200 verbal, didactic, moving games, and about 300 exercises of various kinds, including: breathing, cognitive, communicative, relaxation, physical. Moreover, there is a need for systematic training for educators working with students at risk so that they can develop

their own games. In addition, this condition requires from teachers not only high professional knowledge, but also high competence in the modern educational space, including skills in computer technology and programmes specifically designed for educational institutions [19].

Notably, teachers and parents can also use different collections of visual play material, which is aimed primarily at developing attention, memory, thinking, and imagination, which are of great practical value for students, because during these exercises, they not only learn new skills, but also consolidate the acquired knowledge. Accordingly, the originality and innovation of the proposed changes to the programmes of individual education and re-education of minors belonging to at-risk groups is that its availability is extremely high compared to conventional programmes enshrined in educational materials of educational institutions. That is why this condition allows them to be used by both beginning teachers, beginning psychologists, and even parents, because it offers a large number of technologies, in particular: diagnostic, correctional, and developmental, educational.

According to the author, the application of the proposed individual programme for the education of children with complex behaviour will provide the following results: increase the overall level of cognitive activity of preschoolers and schoolchildren; reduce the level of anxiety and emotional tension in the environment in which the child develops, improve the quality and effectiveness of interpersonal communication in children and educational staff, reduce aggression among students, provide minors with constructive communication skills, facilitate some extremely important process of social adaptation of children, facilitate adequate self-esteem, and establish the appropriate level of self-confidence [20].

Thus, work based on the programme allows children at risk to be fully involved in the educational and social life of kindergarten, school, or the usual social environment, which for its part enables them to excel in their personal development and to feel safe and valued among their peers or adults. Admittedly, it should be understood that the list of tasks and exercises for re-education of children at risk is not exhaustive, as there are many such exercises, especially today. However, it is important for a teacher to be able to choose quality tools for teaching children with complex behaviour, because the future of the minor depends on the correctness of the chosen approach and appropriate methods. It is important in the process of re-education to treat children at risk correctly, because if the teacher disrespects them or has negative attitude towards this category of people, there is no point in hoping for their reformation, because the psycho-emotional environment will provoke the development of deviant and immoral behaviour.

CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the study, it was found that the problem of implementing educational work with children at risk in modern educational space is extremely common. It was found that this is due to the fact that the number of children belonging to the category of complex behaviour is growing every year,

which indicates the low effectiveness of current educational activities. Thus, it was found that most educational materials are quite general and vague; they are implemented in the vast majority of educational institutions in the same form, which means that pedagogical work in this aspect is not developing. The concept of risk group was defined; in particular, it describes the category of children for whom there is a deviation from the norm in physical, psychological, and social development, accompanied by impaired adaptive functions and emotional and personal sphere. In addition, its main features were highlighted, in particular: a clear reflection of certain deviations in the behaviour and actions of the child from other children, correction of behaviour and re-education is quite complex and time-consuming, individual approach is required. Nevertheless, the paper analysed

the factors that affect the inclusion of certain minors in risk groups and identified factors that affect this process. The priority of this stage lies in the fact that when teachers, psychologists and parents study possible causes and phenomena that have a significant impact, including negative, on the child, they are able to understand the nature of the child's deviations and, accordingly, determine the necessary approach and means for re-educating the child in the future, based directly on the cause of the child's risk group.

Since the paper considered several tools used by teachers in re-education of children at risk, and based on the identified shortcomings, proposals for the use of individual curricula was developed. Notably, future research on this topic should also consider other tools that are common in the process of educating children with challenging behaviour.

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Робота з дітьми групи ризику в умовах сучасного освітнього простору

Анотація. Актуальність вивчення методики роботи з дітьми групи ризику є надзвичайно високою, як для звичайних педагогів, так і шкільних психологів, що зумовлено зростанням кількості дітей, віднесених до групи ризику, внаслідок чого формується необхідність щодо дослідження механізму їхнього виховання і відповідно здобуття освіти в межах навчальних закладів. Метою роботи є здійснення аналізу теоретичного поняття групи ризику з подальшим виокремленням його особливостей і критеріїв приналежності дітей до зазначеної групи, а також виявлення поточних методичних заходів організації процесу навчання з такими дітьми і визначення їхньої кореляції з умовами сучасного простору. Для досягнення поставленої мети в роботі було застосовано низку методів для наукових досліджень, зокрема як загальних, так і педагогічних, а саме: метод логічного аналізу, метод синтезу, метод порівняльного аналізу, метод дедукції, метод педагогічного спостереження, морфологічний метод, а також метод аналізу наукової літератури. З'ясовано, що проблема роботи з дітьми групи ризику є надзвичайно важливою й для суспільства зокрема, оскільки завдяки вибору правильного підходу викладача до таких учнів, з'являється можливість їхнього перевиховання та відповідно формування в них поваги до норм, закріплених у соціумі, а також сприяння розвитку їхньої особистості, як законслухняного громадянина. У процесі дослідження було отримано результати теоретичної та практичної спрямованості. Зокрема встановлено сутність поняття «дітей групи ризику», розкрито його ознаки й чинники, що впливають на нього. Проаналізовано поточні засоби й підходи, що використовуються у роботі з учнями групи ризику, зокрема визначено їхню ефективність і доцільність їхнього використання в умовах сучасного освітнього простору, після чого сформовано рекомендації щодо їхнього покращення. Практична цінність роботи полягає в тому, що за умови використання розроблених у ній методик, викладачами чи соціальними психологами, передбачається процес зміни світогляду учнів і закріплення в них цінностей, що допоможуть їм стати повноцінними членами суспільства, які поважатимуть права і свободи інших громадян та відповідно загальноновстановлені соціальні норми

Ключові слова: освіта, освітній процес, педагогіка, девіантна поведінка, педагоги