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## PECULIARITIES OF NEGATIVE BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES IN CHILDREN AT CHILDREN'S HOMES

**Abstract.** Over the last decade, the approaches to the education of children in public care have undergone significant transformation. Despite the attempts to create the conditions in children's homes that promote maximum socialization and integration of the child in society, the pupils of children's homes still have undesirable, socially disapproved forms of behavior, a special place among which is occupied by negative behavioral responses. This circumstance demonstrates the need for a detailed analysis of the indicated phenomenon.

The purpose of this article is to carry out a theoretical analysis of the phenomenology and an empirical study of the characteristics of negative behavioral responses in pupils at a children's home. The study is based on the ideas of domestic and foreign experts about undesirable behavior that is contrary to public interests, but does not extend beyond the "behavioral norm" (N. N. Vasyagina, M. I. Enikeyev, V. P. Zinchenko, S. L. Kolosova, T. P. Kleynikova, D. Konnor, T. G. Rumyantseva, M. G. Taychinov, I. A. Furmanov, D. V. Khorsand, R. Baron, C. Venar, P. Kerig, D. Richardson, etc.), and about the peculiarities of behavior of pupils of children's homes (N. N. Avdeyeva, R. J. Mukhamedrakhimov, A. G. Ruzskaya, N. N. Tolstykh, L. M. Tsaregorodtseva, etc.)

As a result of the study, the authors specify the content of the concept of "negative behavioral responses"; work out a scheme of observation of negative behavioral responses of the child; figure out that all the pupils of children's homes participating in the experiment demonstrate negative behavioral responses; single out groups of children on the basis of orientation of negative behavioral responses (towards themselves, the surrounding objects, adults, or other children) with a description of characteristic negative behav-

ioral responses; carry out an analysis of the factors of negative behavioral responses in pupils at a children's home. The research materials can be used in the work of specialists of various profiles with pupils at children's homes.

**Keywords:** negative behavioral responses; children's homes; children's behavior; children's response orientation; socially disapproved behavior; social interaction; socialization of children.

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Over the last decade, as a result of the development of the state-maintained program of provision of living conditions for orphans and children left without parental care, the number of children in children's homes has radically decreased, and the attitudes to the education of children in state care have been significantly transformed. Despite the attempts to create the conditions in children's homes that promote maximum socialization and integration of the child in society, the pupils of children's homes still have undesirable, socially disapproved forms of behavior, a special place among which is occupied by negative behavioral responses. Describing behavioral peculiarities of the pupils of children's homes, special-

ists mention the presence of such undesirable behavioral manifestations as sucking on one's finger, tongue, lip, or clothes; plucking and twisting hairs; biting, scratching oneself and others; expression of rudeness, cruelty, obtrusiveness, motor disinhibition, inhibition, and sluggishness in putting on clothes; lack of initiative, passive performance of the adults' instructions; stereotyped behavior, etc. Such negative behavioral responses may be observed in all children beginning with infancy regardless of the conditions of living. And in the process of socialization of the child brought up in the family the given negative behavioral responses are substituted by new socially approved forms of behavior. Never-

theless, in children brought up in children's homes, the above mentioned and some other negative behavioral responses get reinforced. The works highlighting the peculiarities of the pupils' behavior at children's homes (V. O. Anikina, G. I. Gaysina, V. I. Oslon, N. L. Pelyakina, O. I. Pal'mov, K. V. Soloyed, A. B. Kholmogorova, etc.) convincingly prove that the negative behavioral responses present obstacles not only for the performance of daily routine measures of the process of teaching and learning but also for the future adaptation of the child in a foster family [5; 6]. In view of this, there arises the need for a detailed analysis of the phenomenon indicated, which, in its turn, has suggested the aim of the given article: to carry out a theoretical analysis of the phenomenology and an empirical study of the characteristics of negative behavioral responses in pupils at a children's home.

Home and foreign studies report about the specific nature of psychological development of the pupils of a children's home in comparison to the peers brought up in a family. Thus, the works by M. I. Lisina and S. Yu. Meshcheryakova note that in the process of the child's maturity, failure to meet the needs for communication with close adults takes the form of aggressive behavior of the child towards all adults [9; 10]. M. O. Proselkova mentions abnor-

mal emotional responses of children to praise and blame manifested both in the form of passivity or indifference and irritation or aggressiveness. Disorders of social interaction between the pupils of a children's home and their peers, absence of stable attachments, behavioral deviations and self-control disorders in the pupils of children's homes have been described in the works by N. N. Avdeyeva, R. Zh. Mukhamedra-khimov, A. G. Ruzskaya, N. N. Tolstykh, L. M. Tsaregorodtseva [4; 11; 12; 13]. L. Fisher, R. Johnson, and K. Browne speak about overfriendliness, unfriendliness, uncontrollable (disinhibited) behavior, stereotyped forms of behavior (twisting body, arms, etc), misbehavior while eating or sleeping in the children brought up outside the family.

All the above mentioned patterns of behavior of children can be regarded within the framework of behavior that does not extend beyond the "behavioral norm" but is in fact "problematic". At present, in connection with a great number of studies regarding "problematic" behavior from different angles, there appears a need to use the notion "negative behavioral response" to identify peculiar features of behavior of the pupils of children's homes.

Analysis of the works of home and foreign authors allows singling out a behavioral pattern which can be classified as *undesirable, contra-*

ry to social interests or negative, but still remaining within the frames of “behavioral norm”. Aggressive behavior studied in psychology by both home and foreign researchers (M. I. Enikeyev, V. P. Zinchenko, S. L. Kolosova, D. Konnor, T. G. Rumyantseva, I. A. Furmanov, D. V. Khor sand, R. Baron, C. Venar, P. Kerig, D. Richardson, etc.) can be referred to such kind of behavior [2; 3; 7; 8; 14; 15; 16; 17]. Conflict behavior studied by such home and foreign authors as V. V. Kovalev, M. I. Lisina, A. N. Lichko, T. D. Mart sinkovskaya, N. N. Vasyagina, M. G. Taychinov, D. B. El’konin, R. Campbell, A. Maslow, Z. Freud, K. Horney and others, is also undesirable [9]. The issues of negativism and obstinacy in behavior are broadly represented in the works by A. I. Barkan, L. I. Bozhovich, V. E. Kagan, T. P. Kleynikova, N. N. Vasyagina, G. A. Tsukerman, A. A. Shav yrina, T. B. Brazelton, E. Keller, G. Salmon and others [17].

By way of analysis of the notions “behavior”, “norm”, “deviating behavior”, “aggressive behavior”, “conflict behavior”. “negativism”, and “obstinacy” we have worked out the term “negative behavioral response” under which, drawing on the point of view of M. Ya. Basov, V. P. Zinchenko, B. G. Meshcheryakov, N. N. Vasyagina, and A. A. Shav yrina, we understand actions aimed at doing harm to oneself or an object in the

environment (either animate or inanimate) [1; 10].

The question of the methods is one of the key issues of the study of negative behavioral responses in children. In foreign studies, the assessment of behavior of children at an early age is performed in the situation of diagnostic testing of the cognitive sphere using the Bayley Scales of Infant and Toddler Development which make it possible to record the presence or absence of negative behavioral responses in a certain situation. The Russian specialists N. L. Galiguzova, E. O. Smirnova, T. V. Ermolova and S. Yu. Meshcheryakova suggested the method “Diagnostics of the Psychological Development from Birth to 3 Years of Age” which allows defining some peculiarities of behavior of the child of the given age. Studying the problem of children’s behavior as one of the most significant challenges, N. M. Platonova worked out a model chart of observation of the child’s behavior which helps to measure the level of aggressiveness of the child, but such indicator as “aggressiveness towards animals”, included in the chart, prevents it from being used under the conditions of a children’s home. In general, the psycho-diagnostic methods described above allow stating certain negative behavioral responses in children brought up at a children’s home, but the existing information is not enough to design a

model of prevention of negative behavioral responses, which, in its turn, leads to the necessity to create psycho-diagnostic tools for detection of negative behavioral responses.

Based on the analysis of home and foreign literature devoted to the description of specificity of negative behavioral responses in children (S. L. Kolosova, N. M. Platónova, E. L. Frukht, O. V. Khukhlayeva, R. Baron, C. Venar, P. Kerig, D. Konnor, D. Richardson, A. Freud, etc.) and the methods of psycho-diagnostic investigation of negative behavioral responses (N. L. Galiguzova, E. O. Smirnova, T. V. Ermolova, S. Yu. Meshcheryakova, N. M. Platonova, E. A. Strebeleva, N. Bailey и др.), we have worked work out a “*Scheme of Observation of Negative Behavioral Responses of the Child*”. The suggested scheme allows the experimenter not only to register the fact of emergence of negative behavioral responses but also to describe various situations in which the given response is detected (limitation of the child’s freedom of action; prohibition to do something issued by an adult, taking meals, the process of dressing and undressing, the situation when other children are present in the group, common game with other children, the situation when other children show negative behavioral responses to the actions of the child, the situation of goal achievement by the child, the situa-

tion of psycho-physical fatigue in various life situations, “failure situation”). The negative behavioral response is registered with its simultaneous classification as belonging to one of the two categories: verbal negative behavioral responses and nonverbal negative behavioral responses.

Thus, the main method of research of negative behavioral responses in pupils of children’s homes was observation on the basis of the “*Scheme of Observation of Negative Behavioral Responses of the Child*”. The data were recorded during the period of 30 days. The daily observation of the negative behavioral responses of the children included the period from waking up in the morning till putting them to sleep after lunch, and from waking up from the daytime sleep till putting them to bed at night, including walks.

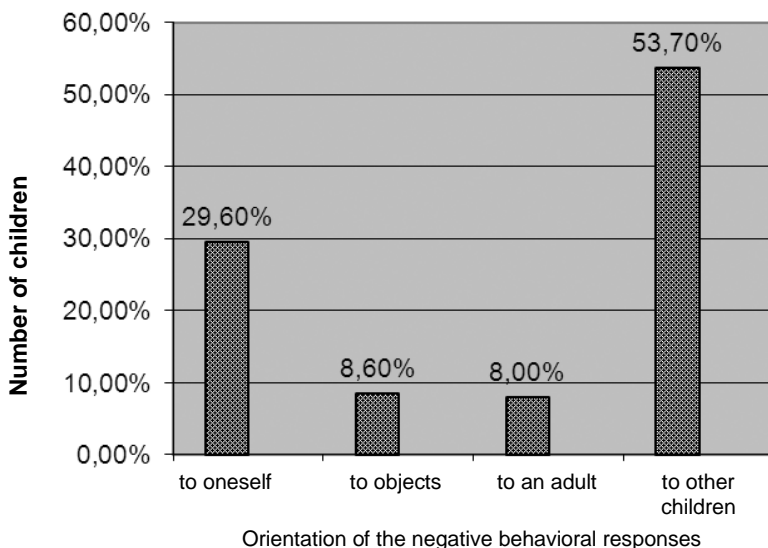
The study was carried out on the base of the state public institution of health protection of Sverdlovsk Oblast “Specialized Children’s Home”. The sample included 162 pupils of the children’s home aged from 2 to 3 years.

The analysis of the experiment results has revealed the presence of negative behavioral responses in all 162 pupils of the children’s home. The negative behavioral responses can be classified according to orientation, degree of manifestation in the situations under study (high –

negative behavioral responses are detected in 6-9 situations under study; moderate – negative behavioral responses are detected in 3-6 situations under study; low – negative behavioral responses are detected in 1-3 situations under study),

and frequency of separate acts of manifestation of different kinds of responses (one-time – less than two acts per minute; manifold – 2 or more acts per minute).

The data obtained are reflected in the diagram in Fig.1.



**Figure 1.** Groups of children’s home pupils depending on the orientation of the negative behavioral responses

It is seen from the data presented in the diagram, that children whose negative behavioral responses are oriented towards other children (53.7 % of the sample) and towards themselves (29.6 % of the sample) prevail among the children brought up at the children’s home. The group of children whose negative behavioral responses are oriented towards an adult person is the smallest one (8.0 %).

Let us dwell on the results obtained in more detail.

48 children of the group of those tested (29.6 % of the sample) have demonstrated negative behavioral responses oriented **towards themselves**. In the *situations under study* the children show the following nonverbal negative behavioral responses: rocking forward and backward while sitting on a chair; suck-

ing and biting fingers and clasped fists; jerking head bent forward; stereotyped turning of wrists; hitting head with the hand; banging one's head on the table or plate; hitting one's head and other parts of the body with a spoon; tugging at one's own hair; recurrent jumps on two legs around the room, etc. The given negative behavioral responses are accompanied by verbal negative behavioral responses: shouting; non-speech sounds resembling growling. The negative behavioral responses described above may be manifested recurrently.

14 children of the group of those tested (8.6 % of the sample) have demonstrated negative behavioral responses oriented *towards surrounding objects*. In the situations under study the children show the following nonverbal negative behavioral responses: overturning the plate with food; overturning the cup; hitting the table with a palm or fist; sliding from the chair and overturning it; biting at the table or chair; spreading food on the table and patting it; kicking the table leg; jumping on the chair, throwing playing and other objects (toys, tooth brush, didactic cards, etc.); kicking playing objects, pieces of furniture, banging the doors of toy furniture; throwing objects off the table; biting playing and other ob-

jects; stripping off clothes or hat from themselves; taking off shoes; demonstrative sitting on the floor and refusing to dress; seizing another child's toy and giving it immediately up. The given negative behavioral responses are accompanied by shouting; laughing or crying. The verbal negative behavioral responses are also represented by words – e.g. “*day*”, “*ne budu*”, “*ne khochu*”, “*net*”, “*uydi*”.

13 children of the group of those tested (8.0 % of the sample) have demonstrated negative behavioral responses oriented *towards an adult person*. In the situations under study the children show the following nonverbal negative behavioral responses: hitting the clothes of a staff member with a palm or fist; tugging at the clothes of a staff member (sleeve, gown pocket, etc.); throwing playing and other objects (toys, tooth brush, clothes, didactic cards, etc.) at a staff member; rocking the chair of a staff member standing beside; tugging at a staff member's hair; etc.

The given negative behavioral responses are accompanied by shouting and laughing. The verbal negative behavioral responses are also represented by words – e.g. “*day*”, “*ne budu*”, “*ne khochu*”, “*net*”, “*uydi*”, “*pusti*”.

**Table 1.** Results of observation of negative behavioral responses in the pupils of a children's home

Orientation of negative behavioral responses	Number of children (% of the total number of children under experiment brought up at the children's home)	Degree of manifestation of negative behavioral responses in situations under study	Number of children (% of the number of children with the given orientation)	Frequency of acts of manifestation of negative behavioral responses	Number of children (% of the number of children with the given degree of manifestation)
Towards oneself	48 (29.6 %)	High	30 (62.5 %)	< 2	0.0 %
				> 2	30 (100 %)
		Moderate	12 (25 %)	< 2	0.0 %
				> 2	12 (100 %)
		Low	6 (12.5 %)	< 2	0.0 %
				> 2	6 (100 %)
Towards surrounding objects	14 (8.6 %)	High	6 (42.9 %)	< 2	2 (33.3 %)
				> 2	4 (66.7 %)
		Moderate	7 (50 %)	< 2	3 (42.9 %)
				> 2	4 (57.1 %)
		Low	1 (7.1 %)	< 2	0.0 %
				> 2	1 (100 %)
Towards an adult	13 (8.0 %)	High	6 (46.1 %)	< 2	4 (66.7 %)
				> 2	2(33.3 %)
		Moderate	2 (15.4 %)	< 2	2(100 %)
				> 2	0.0 %
		Low	5 (38.5 %)	< 2	5 (100 %)
				> 2	0.0 %
Towards other children	87 (53.7 %)	High	49 (56.3 %)	< 2	12 (24.5 %)
				> 2	37 (75.5 %)
		Moderate	17 (19.5 %)	< 2	4 (23.5 %)
				> 2	13 (76.5 %)
		Low	21(24.1 %)	< 2	3 (14.3 %)
				> 2	18 (85.7 %)

87 children of the group of those tested (53.7 % of the sample) have demonstrated negative behavioral responses oriented *towards other children*. In the situations under study the children show the following nonverbal negative behavioral responses: pushing the plate of another child; hitting the head or body of the child next to them with a

spoon or hand; putting the spoon in the plate of another child and throwing the food about; tugging at another child's hair; kicking the chair of the child sitting next to them, throwing playing and other objects (toys, tooth brush, clothes, shoes, didactic cards, etc.) at other children; seizing up various objects of other children; biting at clothes



of other children; biting shoulders, arms, back, cheeks of other children; hair pulling; patting on the back; kicking; grabbing playing objects; tugging at another child's ears; putting a finger in another child's eyes; pushing another child aside (e.g. in the situation when specialists come to the group to take the child to a medical procedure); pushing another child off a chair or sofa; brushing a toy (toy car, bike, swings) off the table; pulling another child off a chair or sofa; pulling a playing object (toy car, bike, swings) off a table.

The given negative behavioral responses may be accompanied by shouting and laughing, or, on the contrary, may be isolated. The verbal negative behavioral responses are also represented by words – e.g. “*uydi*”, “*syad*”, “*polozhi*”, «*moye*», “*ne trogay*”, etc. Moreover, the abovementioned negative behavioral responses can be demonstrated once or recurrently. The quantitative data obtained are presented in table 1.

Our analysis of the data obtained shows that in the groups of children, whose negative behavioral responses are oriented towards themselves, surrounding objects and other children, the frequency of manifestation of response acts is 2 or more times per minute, irrespective of the degree of response manifestation. And in the group of children, whose negative behavioral

responses are oriented towards an adult, the frequency of 2 and less times per minute prevails, irrespective of the degree of response manifestation.

It has been revealed that in the groups of children, whose negative behavioral responses are oriented towards themselves, towards an adult, and towards other children, the majority of children have the high degree of manifestation of negative behavioral responses in the situations under study. The moderate degree of manifestation of negative behavioral responses prevails in the children whose responses are oriented towards the surrounding objects.

One of the tasks of our research was to figure out the factors triggering the negative behavioral responses of the high and moderate degree of manifestation. Having compared the data about the kind of orientation and the factor and the amount of time of staying at the children's home, we can state that 87 children (53.7 %) taking part in the experiment have been at the children's home for less than 6 months and have the high and moderate degree of manifestation of negative behavioral responses oriented towards the surrounding objects, towards an adult, and towards other children. And the most numerous subgroup is made up of the children whose parents (or persons substituting them) have decided to leave the

baby at the institution for some time (48 children), and who have the dominant orientation of negative behavioral responses towards other children (36 children). What is more, all children of the sample, whose negative behavioral responses are oriented towards an adult, have come to the children's home as a result of a temporary refusal of some parents (or persons substituting them) from providing parental care.

In view of this, it is necessary to point out that the families in which parents (or persons substituting them) have made a decision to stop providing parental care for some time, under the current legislation, are not recognized dysfunctional, and in the majority of cases are not registered by the guardianship and custody bodies. As a result, the child who has been brought up in a full family since birth finds themselves in a stressful psycho-traumatic situation when all traditional "family rituals" get ruined. On enrollment to the children's home, the child has to adjust to the new social conditions, rules and norms without consideration of their individual preferences, which, in its turn, may bring forth negative behavioral responses.

The analysis of the factors of negative behavioral responses in the pupils at the children's home has shown that all 48 children with the dominant orientation of negative behavioral responses towards them-

selves have stayed in the children's home since their transfer from the maternity ward and have severe genetic and neurological diseases in their anamneses. In this case, the negative behavioral responses are secondary and tertiary disabilities in the structure of their disorder.

Our study allows stating the presence of negative behavioral responses in the pupils of children's homes which can be oriented towards oneself, towards the surrounding objects, towards an adult, and towards other children.

The frequency of occurrence of negative behavioral responses of different orientation is varied. In most cases, we come across negative behavioral responses oriented towards other children (53.7 %) and towards oneself (29.6 %).

Our analysis of the factors associated with the manifestation of negative behavioral responses of different orientation confirms the fact that temporary refusal of the parents (or persons substituting them) to provide parental care for the child is the most significant cause of negative behavioral responses oriented towards other people, whereas the negative behavioral responses towards oneself are detected in the pupils who have been living in the children's home since birth and have neurological and genetic disorders in their anamneses.

The research materials can be used by specialists of various pro-

files in their work with pupils at children's homes. The results of the study can be taken into consideration while designing a model for prevention of negative behavioral responses in the pupils of a children's home.

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