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The defensive mechanism of Kazakhstan preschoolers prior to covid 19 pandemic

Abstract. The theory of defensive mechanisms is quite controversial. Psychoanalysis opened the door to the big concept of Unconsciousness. Education requires the child's differentiated perception, discretionary attention, and memory, generalization, and abstraction of cognitive processes. However, children of this age do not have the same learning functions as adults and children in need of help. The lack of compliance of some children with the requirements of educational activity caused by objective reasons creates difficulties in learning and makes them anxious. The tenseness, anxiety, sensitivity, timidity, and light excitability become characteristic deviations of the personality traits of younger schoolchildren. Combined with low self-control and a lack of understanding of social norms, these personality traits make it difficult for the child to adapt and provoke the inclusion of protection. We conducted our study in a kindergarten of Aktobe city with 30 kids, age 6.75 % of the participants are inclined to identify themselves with the fairytale hero. 60 % of the subjects noted that their parents often criticized them. Children who often failed were more likely to use lower protection levels, such as denial and projection. While those school children that were more successful used identification. 21 % of the subjects in this test clearly indicated repeated beatings by their parents. 60 % of children reported that parents often abused them and "mother" was more abusive often times.

Keywords: psychological defense; anxiety; destructive and constructive mechanisms of psychological defense

Introduction

The human problem occupies a predominant place in the humanitarian discourse for many thousands of years. During this time, both philosophers and scientists have searched for a broader concept of the human being. Nevertheless, its specific dynamics remain unknown. The area of unconscious expressions of the person, in particular the system of psychological protection, also belongs to such a phenomenon. The psychological defense mechanisms operate in the daily experience of any person and remain as a motive for behavior hidden from him or her and from an inexperienced observer. Psychological protection is one of the most controversial features in the structure of the personality, as it simultaneously contributes to both stabilization of the personality and its disorganization [1, pp. 49–51].

At this point, it was evident that no approach in psychology is as controversial as Sigmund Freud's ideas. Freud captured the definition of defensive mechanisms [2, p. 420]. The defensive mechanisms are one of the most significant discoveries of S. Freud. Freud emphasized: "The doctrine of displacement, the foundation upon which the entire building of psychoanalysis is based, is an essential part of it"¹.

The reason why we became interested in the problem of the psychological protection of primary-school-age children is due to their admission to the school and their inclusion in new educational activities. This fact leads to the sharpening of the emotional features of his or her personality. Education requires the child's differentiated perception, discretionary attention, and memory, generalization, and abstraction of cognitive processes. However, children of this age do not have the same learning functions as adults and children in need of help. The lack of compliance of some children with the requirements of educational activity caused by objective reasons creates difficulties in learning and makes them anxious. School life, a new social situation, becomes an emergency because it makes a child formerly free in his or her desires in a state of dependence, and forms a conflict between «want» and «need». This kind of dependence upon the opinions and assessments of parents, teachers, and peers encourages children to compare themselves with others and to realize their physical and psychological features. However, the process of realization of oneself always goes through experience. The tenseness, anxiety, sensitivity, timidity, and light excitability become characteristic deviations of the personality traits of younger schoolchildren. Combined with low self-control and a lack of understanding of social norms, these personality traits make it difficult for the child to adapt and provoke the inclusion of protection [3, pp. 28–36].

The problem of psychological protection was first introduced in psychoanalysis and manifested itself in different psychological concepts. Sigmund Freud (1894, 1896) noted some ego defenses that he refers to throughout his written works. His daughter Anna (1936) developed these ideas and elaborated on them, adding ten of her own. Many psychoanalysts have also added further types of ego defenses².

Defense mechanisms are psychological strategies that are unconsciously used to protect a person from anxiety arising from unacceptable thoughts or feelings. In psychology, despite the constant interest of researchers in the problems of emotional development and protective manifestations of personality, these questions have not been studied enough, both on theoretical and empirical levels, to which Russian psychologists have repeatedly pointed (A.G. Asmolov, F.V. Bassin, B.V. Zeygarnik, A.V. Petrovsky, etc.). This is especially true for primary school children. However, there is a sufficient amount of research that proves that the foundations of personality laid in the early

¹ Bogdanova M.V. Peculiarities of psychological protection in psychosomatic disorders: author's thesis. ... Cand. psychol. Tomsk State University, Tomsk, 2005, p. 28.

² <https://www.simplypsychology.org/defense-mechanisms.html>.

school years (L.I. Bozhovich, M.I. Lisina, V.S. Mukhina, T.A. Repina). During this age, the child's ideas about his or her "I", the desire to preserve and protect its integrity appears. The need to be accepted in society and the inability to establish desired relationships with others require a comprehensive approach to the education of such children [4, p. 507]. Otherwise, the child develops feelings of loneliness and alienation, which become a source of anxiety and a cause of manifestation of this or that psychological problems [5, p 44]. In case of repetition of such situations in an interpersonal relationship, the child will have to take into account the following factors: sustainable system of protective behavior is being developed in the primary schoolchildren's relations, which has an impact on further personality formation. In this age, in the opinion of researchers, the basic defensive strategies of behavior are defined, and there is an objective necessity for studying means of psychological protection and the factors influencing their formation [6, pp. 66–79].

Attitudes towards psychological defense in psychology have always been controversial. From one point of view, intense conflict situations, they help an individual to find emotional well-being, eliminate anxiety and tension, and from the other point of view, they preserve the cause of dysfunction, i.e., they do not bring actual resolution of conflicts. As a result, the individual, as an instrument of independent resolving of life's problems, does not develop, there is an accumulation of problems, spoilage of character, which later leads to social failure or mental health problems [7].

Unfortunately, in Russian psychology till now, there is no source containing any systematized data on a problem of mechanisms of psychological protection at children. The main attention is paid to the role of relations between parents and children in the formation of mechanisms of psychological protection, rather than studying their manifestation and functioning in the psyche of a concrete child.

The system of defensive mechanisms is developed with an accumulation of vital experience, demands support on the "Ego" which has been formed, therefore, is typical for the adult person. When we speak about a child, we deal with an unformed "Ego", so their formation in childhood has its features. A. Freud emphasized: defensive mechanisms in children have protective character and maintain the normal psychological status of the personality, preventing its disorganization.

The child initially forms each defensive mechanism to acquire specific instinctive impulses, and therefore it is connected with a particular phase of individual development. Their formation results from the various types of anxiety that arise in ontogenesis and typically occur in children. These include anxiety reactions to physical discomfort, fear of separation and independence (solitude, darkness, and closed spaces), fear of death (attacks, illness, death of parents, fairytale characters, and elements), fear of submission (to be punished, to be ashamed), fear of change. They protect the child from displeasure coming from within (internal, instinctive stimuli), and from dissatisfaction, the sources of which are in the outside world.

The child's defensive mechanisms are based on innate unconditional reactions. The kid behaves (which is a form of motor activity) in the process of individual study and development of mental reflection forms.

The specificity of the child's protection system is that it is initially manifested through and at the level of locomotive (behavioral) reactions, with the participation of elementary intellectual functions. These gradually complicating automatic changes in behavior in response to traumas, anxiety, and impression ensure the adaptability of the child to a new life situation. This includes reactions of anxiety to physical discomfort, which ensure the adaptability of the child to the new life situation. For example, a child under one year of age is characterized by such natural innate motor reactions as protective pulling away, squeezing, screaming, crying, smiling, sucking, body movements, extremities, head, and their complexes. Behavioral reactions are expressive, accessible to external observation and registration, so they not only allow for specific changes in the external environment but also attract the attention of surrounding adults.

Thus, later protective mechanisms are formed in which realizations mental functions take part first of all: from perception and emotions to memory and thinking. Such protective processes allow the child to adapt to the environment, not at the expense of changes in the external world, but at the expense of internal changes — the transformation of an internal picture of the world and an image of itself (denial, projection, replacement).

P.M. Granovskaya (1988) described psychological protection structure, noting that unconscious systems function under different laws than conscious information processing structures [8]. The unconscious structures do not fade out the traces of experienced effects. They are stored in the unconscious in their original form, ready to invade new information's perception and processing. "At the first contact of information with sensory inputs, there is a primary, rough estimation of its importance" [8, p. 116]. This manifests itself in proactive decoding of taboo words or an increase in the rate of identification of emotionally powerful stories, which P.M. Granovskaya calls perceptual vigilance. Defensive mechanisms are based on experienced affects and learned norms. It is a system that shapes a person's life experience and values as they accumulate. The structure of psychological protection includes censorship and forms of transformation. Censorship evaluates incoming signals by detecting alarming and dangerous ones and sending them for processing. According to Granovskaya, the reason for the person's most significant anxiety could be a behavior that is in conflict with the individual value system, affecting self-respect. "Therefore, the role of a filter that deactivates traumatic messages promptly is played by a system of ideals and values".

S. Callahan and A. Shabrol (2004) developed a concept that describes the functional organization of coping and psychological protection [9, pp. 92–93]. They believe that coping and defense tend to manifest themselves soon after one another, but not simultaneously, which can be seen in patient stories in psychotherapy or everyday life situations.

According to Tallandini, M.A., & Caudek, C. (2010), who tested kids (N = 103) from 4 till 8 years, DM use decreased with age with different developmental trajectories [10, pp. 535–545]. They also found significant gender differences in use of DM such as regression, displacement, and reaction formation.

Formation of a full system of psychological protection occurs as the child grows up in the process of individual development and learning. The individual set of protective mechanisms depends on concrete circumstances of life that the child faces, on many factors of an intrafamily situation, on the relations between the child and parents.

Defensive mechanisms arise in the child as a result:

- Assimilation of samples of protective behavior demonstrated by parents.
- Negative influence from parents.

Research Methods

- "Children's Apperception Test (CAT)"³ developed by Leopold and Sonia Bellack. This test belongs to the class of interpretive methods, where the significant content of needs, conflicts, personal attitudes is projected.
- "Tell me a story". Dyussa's test designed as projective method where participants has to look at a picture and describe a story.

³ <http://www.healthofchildren.com/C/Children-s-Apperception-Test.html#ixzz6EHSj1UT3>.

- Kinetic Drawing of the Family (KDF), authors: R. Buck. Burns and C. Kaufman, the technique is designed to diagnose intrafamily relationships.

The participants were primary age kids from one of the private kindergarten in Aktobe. We requested parents to sign up Consent of Release of Information.

Data Analysis

Projective methods can be divided into three categories depending on the type of stimulus presented and the expert's way of response. The first category requires the interpretation of ambiguous visual stimuli by the patient using verbal response. Tests in this category include well-known methods such as the Rorschach and Thematic Perception Test (TAT). The second category comprises the final processes. The patient is asked to finish a sentence if there is an ambiguous meaning or complete a story started by an expert. This includes "Duss Tales" ("Despert Fables") and a series of tests at the end of sentences (Unfinished sentences). The third category contains projective creativity, mainly drawing techniques. However, it is also possible to use molding and related art forms. These tasks provide the child with materials to complete the artwork (or simple drawing) and give instructions on the topic, some of which are more specific than others. This category includes such techniques as a kinetic drawing of a family (cattle), drawing "House-Tree Man", drawing "Draw a Man".

We tried to be as objective as possible in the use of projective tests. We used three methods within the research, each of which represents a separate category of projective tests.

"Duss' Tales" (Despert) is a project-based research technique. It was proposed by child psychologist L. Duss in 1940 and translated into English by Despert. While getting acquainted with "Fairy Tales" we saw the possibility of creating a projective method of diagnosing relationships in a family of siblings 6–11 years old. At this age, children willingly invent different stories and are practically unable to hide the truth.

The results of "Duss Tale" showed that 75 % of participants identify themselves with the fairy tale hero. Some participants tend to show rationalization as the primary defense mechanism. For example, in subtest 7, participant R. mentioned that "Elephant became too big, his teeth became prominent, and he has long shots". Therefore, the boy does not want to play with it. The elephant has grown.

Table 1

Research results

N	Identification	Negation	Regression	Substitution	Intellectualization
30	50	13	6	4	15

Compiled by the author

As we see in Table 1, the leading type of DM was "Identification". According to Ryzhov, identification is early stage of projection [11, pp. 97–106]. Projection reveals a suspicious personality expressed through excessive sensitivity, an inability to forgive others' mistakes, negatively interpreting events or other people's behavior, unjustifiable suspicion towards others, and overemphasizing one's rights and self-importance.

One of the paintings used during the research was "Family Feast". Respondents reacted quite painfully to it.

Experimenter: Family holiday, mother's birthday, invited all the relatives, everyone is having fun, but for some reason, the child got up from the table and left, where did he go?

P.: maybe he went to kick the ball, or perhaps he was offended, probably, his mother told him not to come and step aside.

The next picture that resonated the most was picture 5. Many of the subjects refused to answer, and we did not insist on their answers.

Painting No. 5 Bad dream.

Experimenter: one night, a girl was sleeping in her crib, but suddenly she had a terrible dream, and she woke up and jumped out of bed, and the frightened stood. What was she afraid of?

R: She had a dream that her parents were not at home, she was crying, she was scared, her parents wouldn't come to her anymore because they had eaten and bitten them, she had a dream about it, but when she woke up it was not a dream, and it was really true. The girl was left all alone.

We found a familiar plot in kids' stories. More than half of the participants mentioned sibling rivalry. The main motive in children's records was aggression towards the younger sibling. The participants spoke that parents "do not love them" and wanted "break and beat the younger one because they do not want to share".

Children also often noted their parents' aggressive behavior. They clearly spoke that they are beaten by their Mom or Dad, or aunt, who often interferes in family relationships.

Kids mentioned abuse and aggression towards them from "sitting at home, mom". However, their father, who worked, on the contrary, treated them well and protected them both from pressure and showed care.

Children also noted that they live in a stressful environment. C. (6 years old) says that Daddy often says, "children, children, don't be spoiled; otherwise, Mom will come and beat you all".

Project testing's subjectivity inevitably leads to disagreements regarding the assessment and interpretation of answers to test materials. Competent professionals are likely to interpret the meaning and significance of the answer differently at any individual response. That is why objective and subjective testing differs mainly from the lack of agreement on points.

Defense mechanisms are prevalent in our lives. They are generated by conflicts in our social or family relationships, by existential problems in our evolution towards maturity, and by academic or professional setbacks. Our worries, lack of self-confidence or confidence in others, and feelings of guilt and personal inadequacy are among the main indicators of the use of defense mechanisms. Identifying and measuring defense mechanisms are important elements in psychotherapy for dealing with personality disorders. The expression of defense mechanisms reflects the hypothesis that they go throw significant problems.

The test "Kinetic drawing of a family" (KDF) of R. Burns and S. Kaufmann gives the information on a subjective family situation of the child. It helps to reveal the relationships in the family, causing anxiety in the child, shows how he perceives other members of the family and his place among them.

This method is aimed at identifying family relationships. According to the drawing features, qualitative processing is carried out: painted family members, their location, and parts of their drawing. We analyzed the content of the picture and graphological components of the drawing (lines, shading, pressure, etc.).

My observations during the test. The child was upset, it took a while to build a contact with him. I organized some group activity participant C. He was more relaxed after a group drawing class specially organized for him. He was very stressed, showed some signs of anxiety. Looks like he was afraid of my reaction.



Figure 1. Kinetic drawing of the family, participant C. (compiled by the author)

Participant S.: This is the Dad, usually sitting in the phone, this is Mom, and she usually cooks food, And this is Me, and I hold a book, the sun, and rainbow. The most satisfied is Mom in the family, the saddest is Me.

Experimenter: why are their hands big? (no answer) Why are you bored? Are you offended? Are you scolded? are you beaten? (no, shake your head, you are well-fed, he answered — no, he said that his parents tell him, "stop eating".

As shown in figure 1, subject C. needs approval and a psychologically warm relationship with his parents.



Figure 2. Kinetic drawing of the family, subject D. (compiled by the author)

62 % of the participants displayed all family members in their drawings. Test subject D. drew the whole family vacationing at the picnic; she depicted all family members. We found out that the picture represents the participant's anxiety towards a younger brother. Participant D. noted in a later interview that her brother often cries and complains; in general, the drawing indicates a reasonably healthy family relationship.

We found that 30 % of the subjects showed only one parent in the picture. For example, test subject M. has shown only her mother in the picture.



Figure 3. Kinetic drawing of the family, test subject M. (compiled by the author)

M.: Mom goes to the hairdresser's shop because her hair is very long. Mom often wants to walk alone in the street, so she took the balloons and went out. I don't want to paint the rest of them (when asked why the participant thought for 5 minutes then answered that she was too tired). The interviewer noted that the participant was very active and didn't look tired.

A graphical family test is a way to learn about relationships within a family, their place, their role, and how each member relates to the test subject. This test evaluates such aspects as addiction, rivalry, conflict, and attachment. The examiner considers each family member's position if someone is absent, the correspondence to reality, the absence of body parts, etc. We would like to pay attention to the fact that the main feature of the kinetic drawing is all family members' total employment.



Figure 4. Kinetic drawing of the family, subject D. (compiled by the author)

Test subject's comment D.: Mom holds flowers. She loves us all, but sometimes she scolds me, and when mom wants me not to disturb her, she gives me her phone. I love my Dad, but sometimes he hits me on the hands, my hands tightly squeeze (Wrists), it hurts me. And my apatite which 7 years also beats me when nobody is at home and nobody to protect me, but it is probably normal. I am the happiest at home, and the saddest is my mother because she often swears.



Figure 5. Kinetic drawing of the family N. (compiled by the author)

Subject N: Mom cooks food, Dad looks at the phone, I play with my toys, and next to us is our house. We have the happiest mom, and sadness is often Dad. He often cries because he wants to love me. He also needs to love Mom; Mom scolds Daddy to look at her, Daddy pushes Mom and beats his stomach a little bit, and then I give Mom syrup so that she does not cry and not get sick. Daddy is afraid of Mom. She scares us and shouts. And my mom has a baby in her stomach.

21 % of the subjects in this test clearly indicated repeated beatings by their parents. 60 % of children reported that parents often scolded, and "mother" scolded more often.

According to researchers, a neurotypical child at age 6 should be able to schematically draw the family. However, 18 % of the subjects experienced apparent difficulties. Given the subjects' period and the lack of information from the medical and psychological commission, we cannot assess some pictures objectively. The content of some pictures and respondents' reactions indicate possible developmental issues. However, it would be extremely unprofessional and unethical to draw such conclusions based on drawings without using comprehensive assessment methods.

Analysis and interpretation of data resulting from the use of CAT

«The Children's Apperception Test (CAT) is a projective personality test used to assess individual variations in children's responses to standardized stimuli presented in the form of pictures of animals (CAT-A) or humans (CAT-H) in common social situations. In a supplement to the CAT — the CAT-S — the stimuli include pictures of children in common family situations such as prolonged illnesses, births, deaths, and separations from parental figures. The CAT, developed by psychiatrist and psychologist Leopold Bellak and Sonya Sorel Bellak and first published in 1949, is based on the picture-story test called the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). The TAT, created by psychologist

Henry A. Murray for children (ten years old and older) as well as adults, uses a standard series of 31 picture cards in assessing perception of interpersonal relationships. The cards, which portray humans in a variety of common situations, are used to stimulate stories or descriptions (orally or in writing) about relationships or social situations and can help identify dominant drives, emotions, sentiments, conflicts and complexes. The examiner summarizes and interprets the stories in light of certain common psychological themes»⁴.

The original CAT consisted of ten cards depicting animal (CAT-A) figures in human social settings. The Bellaks later developed the CAT-H, which included human figures, for use in children who, for a variety of reasons, identified more closely with human rather than animal figures. A supplement to the CAT (the CAT-S), which included pictures of children in common family situations, was created to elicit specific rather than universal responses.

Table 2

Results of using CAT

N	Negation	Regression	Substitution	Rationalization	ACE ⁵
30	23	15	20	30	34

Compiled by the author

We want to note that specific drawings caused resistance in children. In general, children were more reluctant to respond to CAT than they were to "Duss Tales". As we remember, the CAT was made in a rather dark black and white form, which may not have been so interesting for children.

We will quote some children's statements because we believe that they are much more eloquent than any of our interpretations:

No! (with irritation, although all our dialogue she is in a great mood), dads do not beat children! And mom hits (imitates hitting on the head with her fist) I: hit on the head? C: beats everywhere! (dissatisfied) but Alykosha (miscalculated and corrected) Baby is not beaten by anyone. When it does not hurt because my mother hits them in different places (older and middle), big chicken and center want to be small so that my mother is always near. When mommy with baby 2, the other children play computer for 6 hours (picture 8).

"This is probably their relatives, this is grandparents, and this is a mom and near the baby, and mom says to the baby, do not go anywhere, or you will get lost. The grandparents quietly told each other that probably kids should not have been invited to our house. Grandparents wanted to relax and did not mess with the child. The child is spoiled, and no one wanted to take her" (picture 8).



Figure 5. Picture 1 ("Chickens at the Table")³

⁴ <https://www.encyclopedia.com/medicine/divisions-diagnostics-and-procedures/medicine/childrens-apperception-test>.

⁵ ACE — Adverse_Childhood_Experiences.

Mom puts the most porridge on the giant chicken because it is the oldest. But the more senior chicken wants to eat everything himself, but my mother will not say, and will scold, and will beat my hands, it hurts. The chickens are friendly. They are very eager to eat. Mom and Dad love us, but the little brother loves us the most (picture 5).

It is a cave for bears, and here their child is a bear, and he lies alone and sad and left alone because he is small, but small can not be left alone (thought) because he is sorry (picture 6).



Figure 6. Picture 6 ("Bears in a darkened cave")³

Here in the crib sleep, a boy and a girl, and on the big bed sleep daddy and mom, they will wake up and do exercises and turn on music. Mom and Dad will then go to work. Daddy works where they repair the car, the wheels, and also makes light. Daddy sometimes scolds the baby, shouts to go to bed, and the baby is afraid and cries but says nothing because she can't talk. The baby is worried when it is dark, and she will put the bed in front of the door so that Mommy does not go anywhere else (picture 7).

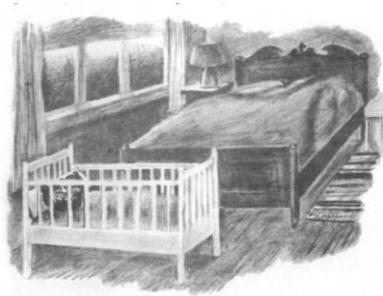


Figure 7. Picture 5 ("Two Bears in a Crib")³

This is the monkey's papa, and this is the papa of the imam; they drink tea and talk about something. And here daddy tells the baby, "no-no-no I don't know why". This child is 7 years old, he is an adult, and his daddy hurts because 7 years old can't be spoiled. His grandmother put him in a corner and daddy, and mom hit the baby, hitting the face when she hurts the little baby (picture 8).



Figure 8. Picture 8 ("An adult monkey talking to a little monkey")³

— Mom and Dad in bed are arguing. Dad even fought with Mom and pulled Mom out of bed, and Mom told him that he was sick. At night, Mommy plays the phone, and Daddy sleeps (picture 7).

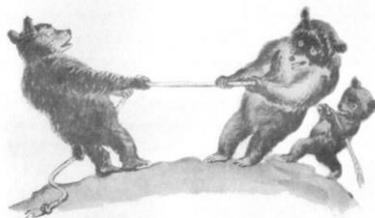


Figure 9. Picture 2 ("Bears pulling the rope")³

Bears compete, mom and baby, and Dad in front of them. As a result, mom will win, and Dad will fall. Daddy often quarrels and hits, hits on hands, and sometimes on the head (picture 9).

Bears argue, daddy and daughter, and opposite the wolf. In the end, he is strong, daddy wins, curses his mother, and made her vava at home beat her. I was also cursed; I cried and tormented together with my mother (picture 9).

Daddy and Mom in the crib, when we slept, Mom scolded Daddy, and vava made him, and he had blood (picture 7).

They are bears, and they play tug-of-war. They are mommy and child and opposite daddy, in the end. The bear with the child will win; the rope will be pulled to his side. The daddy will be offended, lost, and will beat mommy on the stomach where there is a baby (picture 9).

UNICEF published the results of the study in 2019⁶. 75 % of adults found it acceptable to use physical punishment against children. Thus, every SECOND child in Kazakhstan aged 2–14 years was exposed to violence from their parents. A serious obstacle to eliminating violence is the fairly narrow understanding of the term "violence", which is often limited to physical exposure. Violence is not commonly defined as intimidation, psychological pressure, or verbal abuse.

To change established social norms, UNICEF is conducting communication campaigns in many regions of Kazakhstan⁷. Recently UNICEF announced a new campaign, "Positive Parenthood". According to experts, discipline is not the same as punishment. The discipline isn't a punishment.

The discipline should be based on understanding, mutual respect, tolerance, and effective two-way communication. Children are totally dependent on their parents. As they grow up, they rely on adults, especially parents, to support them until they become mature, disciplined people. Corporal punishment does not teach children how to behave. On the contrary, hitting is an example of bad behavior. It shows that parents find it acceptable to use violence to solve problems or conflicts.

According to Elzhas Ertayula, teenagers' main reasons for aggressive behavior are the distance between parents and children, when adults do not want to spend time with their children. That is why children prefer to spend their time in virtual reality with their smartphones and computer games.

Conclusions

At the same time, you can see that many subjects are using somewhat maladaptive methods of stress management as "aggressive-affective behavior". As a rule, this strategy is typical for boys in general; let's see any gender differences.

⁶ Sahova, G. (2019). UNICEF found out how Kazakhstan citizens raise children. Retrieved from https://www.inform.kz/ru/yunifef-vyyasnil-kak-kazahstancy-vospityvayut-detey_a3494440.

⁷ Saliyeva, D. (2019). The online marathon will inspire Kazakhstan parents. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/kazakhstan>. Psychology and Society.

In general, if we pay attention to the data obtained because of the study, we see the most problematic areas of behavior for children: problems of internalization, externalization issues, aggressiveness, attention difficulties. The aggression is the most common problem of behavior mentioned by parents and teachers. The aggressive behavior of preschoolers decreased the chances of socialization and integration. At the same time, we should pay attention to the fact that, in general, the Achenbach method has shown standard features of the development of children in preschool age. There are significant differences between boys and girls on the "closed-down" scale. Thus, parents notice that boys have difficulties expressing themselves and are not as open as girls.

75 % of the participants are inclined to identify themselves with the fairytale hero. 60 % of the subjects noted that their parents often criticized them. Cramer P., identified a pattern of using protective mechanisms. Children who often failed were more likely to use lower protection levels, such as denial and projection. While those school children that were more successful used identification [12, pp. 114–122].

21 % of the subjects in this test clearly indicated repeated beatings by their parents. 60 % of children reported that parents often scolded, and "mother" scolded more often.

According to researchers, a neurotypical child at age 6 should be able to schematically depict the family. However, 18 % of the subjects experienced apparent difficulties. Given the subjects' age and the lack of information from the medical and psychological commission, we cannot assess some pictures objectively. Their content and respondents' reactions indicate possible mental development; however, it would be extremely unprofessional and unethical to draw such conclusions only based on drawings without using comprehensive assessment methods.

In the above examples, we have seen situations that give rise to protective mechanisms, some of which are constructive and counterproductive. The conditions described above illustrate not the true pathological problems but the emotions experienced by sensible people who have functioning problems. We have told children, but their reactions can be adapted to other environments, such as school or family life. Protective mechanisms are present throughout our lives.

The analysis revealed that children already use several types of psychological protection at the same time. Care and denial, regression, displacement, and identification are already typical for younger school children. Some protection mechanisms are learned by children themselves, while others are learned through observation of adult behavior. Therefore, an individual set of protective mechanisms depends on the specific life circumstances that a child encounters in kindergarten and family on defensive behavior samples.

We are concerned about the fact that 60 percent of participants suffer from domestic violence. Every child that has been subjected to violence or abuse needs medical, social, psychological, and legal assistance — the consequences of violence can become irreversible. A comprehensive approach and participation of several professionals are critical: social worker, psychologist, and lawyer. At the same time, it is essential to keep in mind the family that also needs support to understand the consequences of trauma and help the child cope with it.

Often adults do not know what violence is or what its consequences for a child. We have investigated how people feel about violence against us in the country. Over 50 percent do not think that slaps are abuse elements, even though it affects child development and humiliation. The foundation of any society's growth and prosperity is children's development, each child's ability to reach their potential. Unfortunately, even such so-called safe forms of violence prevent a child from developing to its fullest potential. If a child is beaten and humiliated, it is more likely that they will use power. Therefore, violence becomes cyclical, and it passes from father to son. This is confirmed by our studies in Kazakhstan, as well as UNICEF global studies around the world.

Discussion

In the early 20th century, Sigmund Freud first wrote about the unconscious [13, pp. 21–70]. His daughter Anna Freud developed the concept of a protective mechanism. The keyword in this concept is the word «protection» [14, 256 p.]. Many media outlets are now talking about an increase in violence against women and children. The World Health Organization and UNICEF urged all countries to pay attention to the most vulnerable population: "women and children". Who may be weaker and unable to protect themselves as a child?

Choosing such a topic imposes a huge responsibility. Childhood is a unique experience. The child perceives reality through a prism. The first environment that forms him or her is the family. Relationships between parents, their values, their ability to accept their child and bring him up, respecting him as a person, seem almost impossible in modern realities [15, p. 16–22].

About 40 % of the subjects did not want to see their parents in their families. Children were candid that "the father beats the pregnant mother" or frequently "squeezes her wrists painfully". It is possible that the parents of these children had no idea how much pain they hurt their children. After all, such behavior is a constant long-term stress for the child, interfering with his psychological development. It is also more likely to affect the life span of the child. Children subjected to violence tend to live 15 years less, which is associated with an increase in chronic illness.

Resilience can be defined as the ability to recover from stress or injury by adopting healthy coping strategies for trauma and stress. The logical reaction of psychopathologists to stress can be viewed from two perspectives. D. Siegel mentioned that screaming and yelling cause negative changes in the brain of the children [16, pp. 21–47]. Kids are mostly in "fight or flight" mode, which does not help them self-regulate or learn new concepts.

The leading copying strategies were pleasure-seeking and affective regulation. Sufficiently high data on the aggressiveness scale indicate that the test subjects may need support at the moment. Most children who have been abused or neglected have serious difficulties forming healthy attachments. The relationship between children and parents is significant in developing a child's mental health. In attachment theory, a healthy parent-child relationship begins a "basic trust", which in turn forms the basis for both adequate self-esteem and psychological health. According to evolutionary theory, mammals have a special relationship with their children. A child is born entirely unprotected and unsuitable for life, so the parent is a bulwark of stability and security. If a parent is cruel, aggressive, even if verbal, it will forever traumatize the child's early psyche. The one who has to protect and save becomes an "aggressor", as then it is possible to trust someone in this world if you are betrayed by the closest and dearest people. Children who have grown up in an environment of violence and abuse experience the most potent chronic stress. They often find it difficult to control and express their emotions, and they may react violently or inadequately to situations. They may be too sensitive to others' moods, always watching what adults around them feel and how they will behave. They can hide their own emotions from other people, never letting them see when they are afraid, sad, or angry. Such assimilated devices make sense when there is a constant physical and/or emotional threat. When a child grows up and encounters safe situations and relationships, these habits are no longer beneficial. Still, they can actually be counterproductive and prevent them from living, loving, and being loved.

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Защитные механизмы казахстанских дошкольников перед пандемией covid 19

Аннотация. Теория защитных механизмов весьма противоречива. Психоанализ открыл дверь к большой концепции Бессознательного. Обучение требует от ребенка дифференцированного восприятия, произвольного внимания, а также памяти, обобщения и абстрагирования познавательных процессов. Однако дети этого возраста не обладают теми же познавательными функциями, что и взрослые, и дети нуждаются в помощи. Несоответствие некоторых детей требованиям учебной деятельности, вызванное объективными причинами, создает трудности в обучении и вызывает у них тревогу. Напряженность, тревожность, чувствительность, робость, легкая возбудимость становятся характерными отклонениями в личностных особенностях младших школьников. В сочетании с низким самоконтролем и непониманием социальных норм эти личностные особенности затрудняют адаптацию ребенка и провоцируют включение защиты. Мы провели наше исследование в детском саду города Актобе с 30 детьми, возраст 6 лет. 75 % участников склонны идентифицировать себя со сказочным героем. 60 % испытуемых отметили, что родители часто критикуют их. Дети, которые часто терпели неудачи, чаще использовали более низкие уровни защиты, такие как отрицание и проекция. В то время как те школьники, которые были более успешны, использовали идентификацию. 21 % испытуемых в этом тесте четко указали на неоднократные побои со стороны родителей. 60 % детей сообщили, что родители часто издевались над ними, причем "мать" чаще всего издевалась над ними.

Ключевые слова: психологическая защита; тревожность; деструктивные и конструктивные механизмы психологической защиты